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## ON THE COVER

Jodie Foster  
photographed for  
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY  
by Lance Staedler  
in Los Angeles  
on Jan. 23

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# Entertainment WEEKLY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2002

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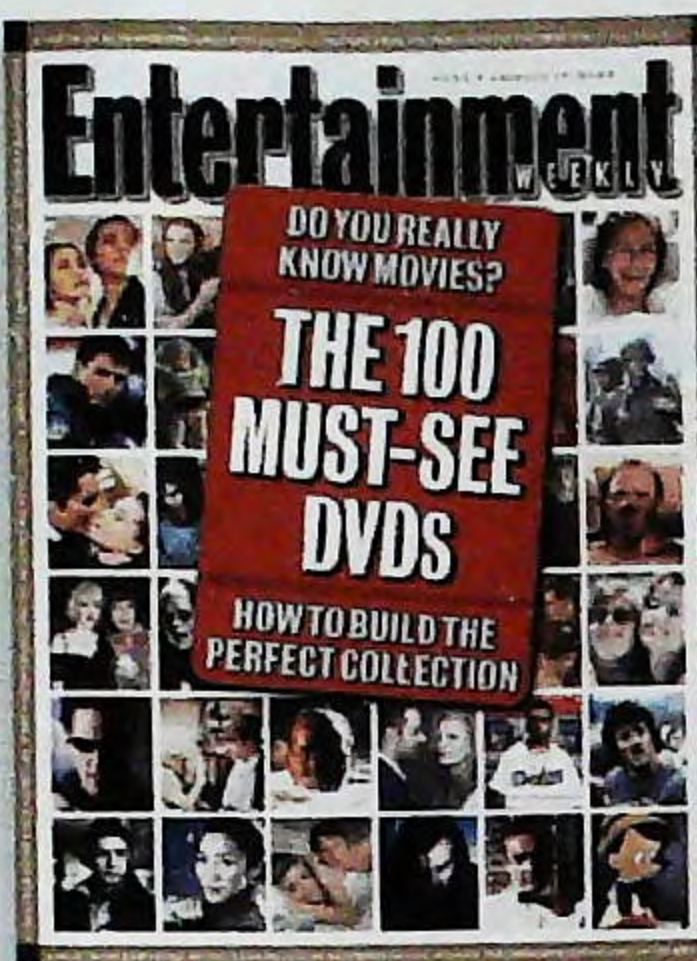
**19 THE SCOUT** Valentine's Day treats; Hollywood blondes go brunette; makeover of the week.

**6 PRESIDENT'S LETTER** Celebrating the brief, but full, life of former EW San Francisco advertising sales manager Jacque Lapsey.

**4 MAIL** More must-see DVD.

**72 ENCORE** Feb. 8, 1990: After years of fighting depression, pop-rocker Del Shannon commits suicide.





**MAIL** Judging from the vehement responses to our 100 Must-See DVDs cover (#634, Jan. 11), the digital revolution isn't just spinning its wheels—uh, discs—it's here to stay. "Kudos for the best 100 list ever compiled," writes Rev. John Wiley Nelson from Provincetown, Mass. "A vallant, much appreciated effort." Brian Sorensen of Long Beach, Calif., was equally stoked: "Your selections are groundbreaking! This [issue] is a definite keeper!" But others felt shortchanged, wondering why their favorite flicks didn't make the cut. Asks Jamie Skaggs of East Northport, N.Y.: "How can you forget three of the best trilogies of all time: *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, and *Back to the Future*?" Answer: They're not out on DVD yet.

## The Digital Divide

I WAS DVDELIGHTED BY YOUR 100 Must-See DVDs list! A perfect primer for building a digital library!

**ROGER TENNIS**

critic@writeme.com  
Tempe, Ariz.

YOU'VE GIVEN US THE MOST substantial list to grace your pages. It's interesting to note the representative drop in artistic merit with your post-1977 picks, lending support to the argument that they don't make 'em like they used to.

**LUIS REINOSO**

lreinoso68@yahoo.com  
Washington, D.C.

I HAD TO REREAD TY BURR'S "Crash Course: John Hughes" three times to believe that he neglected to mention what is arguably Hughes' best work: *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, featuring one of Steve Martin's funniest performances, along with the late John Candy in his one truly great movie role.

**MARK BELDEN**

markbelden@yahoo.com  
Chicago

I KNOW THE FIRST RULE OF *Fight Club* is "Do not talk about *Fight Club*." But to ignore it, and David Fincher, on

your list of DVDs? That just feels like a punch in the face!

**ROBIN HEATH**

rbinmackay@aol.com  
Albuquerque, N.M.

NO TRUSTWORTHY DVD LIST would be complete without *The Black Pirate* starring Douglas Fairbanks. It's the granddaddy of all romantic action films.

**BRIAN JUDGE**

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Washington, D.C.

I'M SURPRISED YOU LEFT out Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. The restored DVD is not only beautiful, but the score is majestic.

**JESSE ALTER**

alterj@carleton.edu  
Northfield, Minn.

AFTER AUDITING "CINEMA Literacy 101," I wonder how *The Bridge on the River Kwai* got cut from the curriculum?

**CHAD ARMSTRONG**

Wichita, Kan.

...*SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE*, *The Goonies*, and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*?

**ZACHARY H. SHOTLAND**

zach@shotland.net  
Del Ray Beach, Fla.

...*THE SOUND OF MUSIC*?

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beloved-movie-of-all-time about the family in Austria.

**TRI FRITZ**

Pasadena

...CLINT EASTWOOD'S *Unforgiven*?

**RYAN McNALLY**

rmcnally@billian.com  
Atlanta

...THE WORK OF JOHN Cassavetes?

**MATT MASON**

piecd@yahoo.com  
Brooklyn

...BLOOD SIMPLE? COME ON!

**JAMES LIGHTBOURNE**

Virginia Beach, Va.

...ONE OF THE MOST ingenious filmmakers of the decade: Kevin Smith?

**SARAH LEBOEUF**

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Bloomfield, N.J.

## Marking Anthony

I AM SO HAPPY THAT EW finally gave one of my favorite actors his much deserved kudos. Anthony LaPaglia is one of the best actors around (Movies). He has played the ham, the brother, the wiseguy mafioso, the saint, and the angel—all with precision and perfection. I am looking forward to the day when Anthony and his

brother Jonathan LaPaglia (of CBS' *The District*) act in a project together. That would truly be an "Oz Célèbre"!

**LORI GLUMAC**

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San Francisco

WWW.EW.COM (AOL KEYWORD: EW)

## True Romance

Need some Valentine's Day inspiration? Visit [www.ew.com/valentine](http://www.ew.com/valentine) for:



• Stars pick their favorite romantic movies. Julia Roberts chooses *The Philadelphia Story* because it's "quick, smart, funny, and complicated. I love when you're as confused as they are." Find out which flicks move the hearts of Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry, Nelly Furtado, Ashton Kutcher, and, gulp, Kid Rock.

• See new photos of today's hottest celebrity lovebirds, including Benjamin Bratt, Jessica Alba, Gwen Stefani, Tom Cruise, and more.

## Tube Tops

February sweeps is here. To separate the must-see shows from the must-flee nos, turn to [www.ew.com/tv](http://www.ew.com/tv). Among the highlights: *Temptation Island* 2 finale, the Simpsons reenact Demi Moore's *Indecent Proposal*, and Mr. Big is back!

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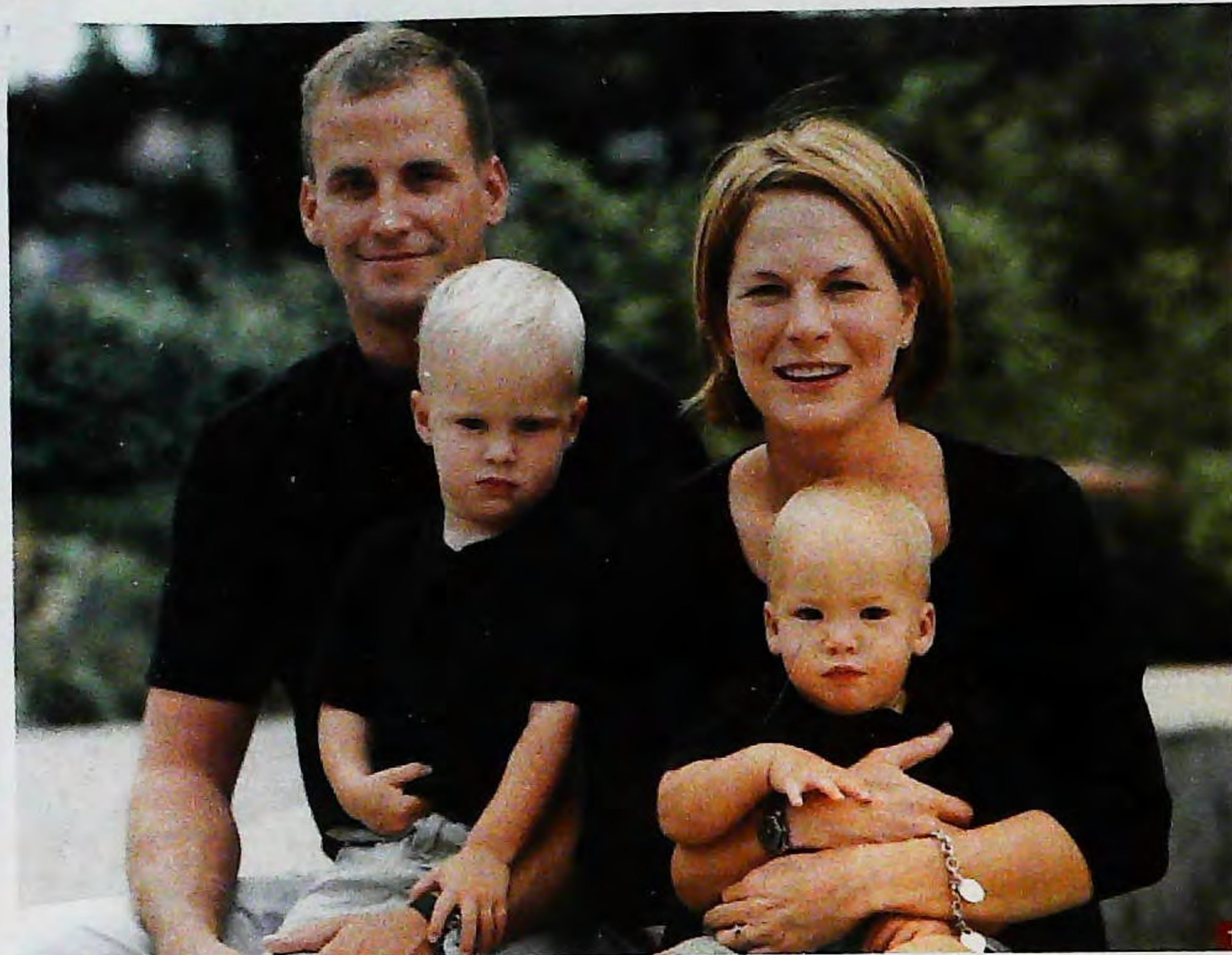
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# One of Our Finest

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & THE EDITOR

EW's Jacque Lapsey brought passion to work, play, and family

ONE IS NEVER READY FOR THE CALL—the one in which you learn you've lost someone important to you. On Jan. 17, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY received such a call about a member of our family. Former San Francisco ad sales manager Jacque Lyttle Lapsey, who had just left EW to join *Martha Stewart Living*, had died of pneu-

mococcal meningitis, an inflammation of the fluid around the brain and spinal cord.

Just 36 years old and nearly eight months pregnant, Jacque had fallen ill the previous afternoon and was taken to the hospital by her husband of nine years, Chris Lapsey, 33. Doctors could not save her, but they delivered 3-pound 14-ounce Holt in Jacque's final hours.

(She leaves behind two other boys, Will, 4, and Luke, 2.) "Holt is doing very well," says Chris, "which would be the most important thing to Jacque."

Jacque's boundless spirit made her an unforgettable part of EW. Passionate, irreverent, and self-deprecating, this minister's daughter, who grew up one of nine kids in Sullivan, Ind., was born to work here. A De-

Pauw University grad, she became EW's San Francisco manager in 1998. "Jacque's clients connected with her unbridled enthusiasm and unique style," says EW publisher Dave Morris. "It was hard to find anyone more fun to be around. Period."

Jacque's S.F. office brimmed with family photos, including a poster of the kids. She grappled with being a working mom (a 3-month-old Will accompanied her to an EW meeting in New York), but she loved her job. That she brought grace and gusto to both roles made her an inspiration to every mom on staff.

She was also a pop-culture queen. At an EW costume party, this fan of designer Marc Jacobs transformed herself into Laverne De Fazio ("L" sweater,



THE WAY SHE WAS (1) From left, Chris, Will, Jacque, and Luke; (2) Jacque (right) does her best Laverne with ex-coworker Christine Connolly

etc.). And, of course, she knew what she'd do if she ran Hollywood. "She wanted to update *Desk Set*, in dotcom-crazed San Francisco," says EW assistant managing editor Maggie Murphy. "She was so convincing. If I had \$20 million, I would've greenlit it then and there."

Last summer, because she and Chris longed to return to the Midwest, Jacque took a job at *Martha Stewart* in Chicago—but we hoped she'd return to EW one day. In her eulogy, Rev. Christine Chakoian of Community Presbyterian Church in Clarendon Hills, Ill., said: "[Jacque] threw herself into her life—all of her life—150 percent. And she wouldn't have given any of it up—not one moment, not one loved one, not one friend."

We'll treasure every moment we had with Jacque. Our hearts are with Chris and her boys. They, and she, will forever remain a part of the EW family.

JOHN SQUIRES  
PRESIDENT

JAMES SEYMORE  
MANAGING EDITOR

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IN CONCERT  
FROM HAWAII

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# NEWS NOTES

February 15, 2002 Movies Video Internet Edited by Thom Geier

ANOTHER SEASON?



## FRIENDS FOREVER?

**NBC plays let's-make-a-deal with the Central Perk six. by Lynette Rice**

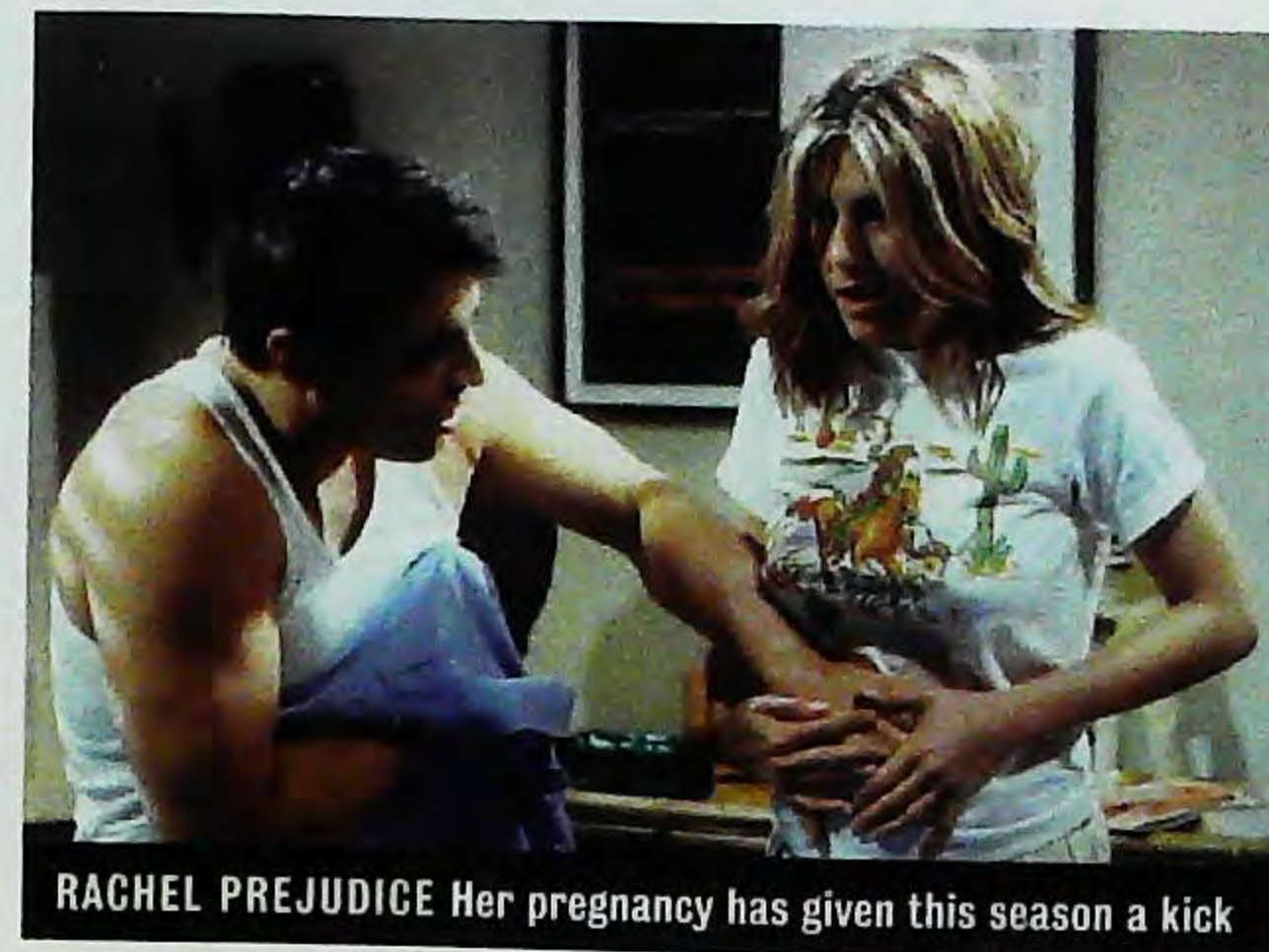
**L**ET'S FLASH BACK: IT'S May 2000, and negotiations to re-sign *Friends* for two more seasons have turned more unsightly than, well, Ugly

Naked Guy. The six comely sitcom stars have NBC over a barrel: Pony up hundreds of thousands of dollars more to each per episode or suffer the end of Must See TV as you

know it. Emotions are high, lines in the sand are drawn, but in the end **David Schwimmer, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry, Courteney Cox Arquette, Jennifer Aniston, and Lisa Kudrow** do indeed re-up, for a generous \$750,000 per episode.

Cut to February 2002: Contracts are up again, and again

the *Friends* are asking for a hefty pay raise for a ninth season. The big difference: No one's making a mooney Ross face inside a tense conference room. In fact, barring any last-minute flashes of greed (by the actors) or stinginess (by NBC), all parties are optimistic that *Friends* will return with each actor



**RACHEL PREJUDICE** Her pregnancy has given this season a kick

making around \$1 million per episode. "So far it's been very cordial—it has not been adversarial," says a Peacock insider. "It's too much money [to leave on the table]," says a source close to the cast. "It wouldn't be sensible to not come to terms. This is not brain surgery."

No-brainer jokes aside, not all the *Friends* are equally gung ho about re-signing. According to sources on the show, Schwimmer and Kudrow (both of whom expressed reservations about returning during the '96 and 2000 contract talks) may again be the ones with slightly chilly feet. In fact, one insider says writers were so worried about Kudrow, who's largely been sidelined during the Joey-falls-for-pregnant-Rachel plot, they contemplated ways to boost her story arcs to keep her happy. Ultimately, says the source, they decided to "do the best show possible without trying to please everybody."

Still, reports from the actors' camp are generally upbeat: One on-set source says the typically blasé sextet has been seen at the table-reads each Friday poring over the revitalized Nielsen's (the show is enjoying its largest audiences—an average 24.5 million—in five years). But Schwimmer and Kudrow may not have the last word. On a Jan. 30 *Tonight Show* visit, LeBlanc told **Jay Leno** that

when it comes to the cast's all-for-one, one-for-all credo, "majority rules on just about everything, from where we go to lunch to whether we're coming back. So if you're in the minority, you're screwed. You say, 'So I guess I have to go back.' We're talking about it now and it will probably all work out."

From the suits' point of view, the only head-scratcher left is how NBC and Warner Bros. (which produces *Friends*) will amass all that cash for the cast's salaries. Currently, Warner Bros. (a division of EW parent AOL Time Warner) bears the brunt of the cost, which it covers by charging NBC roughly \$5.5 million per episode. But to meet the actors' demands

this time, Warner wants at least enough to break even—but more than the net may want to pay. "It's mind-boggling," says a source close to the talks, referring to the \$1 billion Warner will make off *Friends* in syndication. "[Warner Bros.] doesn't feel like they need another year of *Friends*. They have a lot of money. There's a feeling NBC needs it more than them."

With apologies to Chandler, could they be any more right? NBC hasn't exactly been laughing its way to the bank in developing new comedies (*Three Sisters*, *Emeril*, *Inside Schwartz*—need we say more?). And so far nobody's predicting a slam dunk with **Julia Louis-Dreyfus'** *Watching Ellie*. "As much of a visionary and forward thinker as [NBC Entertainment prez] **Jeff Zucker** is, it's hard to develop one additional comedy," says a scheduling exec at a rival net. "Even if *Friends* eroded next year, it's still going to be the No. 1 show on TV. It withstood a strong nonscripted show [*Survivor*] because it's a scripted show. And if it returns I don't believe any network other than CBS is going to seriously go after it."

Which is why the industry

thinks NBC won't let *Friends* get away. "Nobody seems to be panicking over at NBC," says a source familiar with the negotiations. "I don't get a sense from them like 'Well, guess what, we will become mortal next year.' They'll do whatever it takes to keep *Friends*, whether [it means paying] \$6 million or \$8 million an episode."

Sure, but time is of the essence. Production just began on the season's 17th episode and the scribes need to plan for the birth of Rachel's baby (which presumably will mark either the season or series finale). Since talks could drag on, says a show insider, "the writers are preparing a series ender that could be tweaked into a cliff-hanger if the cast decides to come back." But the fact that negotiations have even gotten this far is a boon to NBC, which was convinced last summer that *Friends* wouldn't be back. After Sept. 11, though, the familiar sextet became comfort food for America. At this point, can anything stop *Friends*? Perhaps only if the stars take the advice of one rival network exec: "The way to go out, the classy way to be remembered, is to go out on top." ■

## SCRIPT TEASES

**HERE'S ANOTHER QUESTION HANGING over the *Friends* contract talks: Should the stars return for season 9, will there be enough plotlines left for them? Maybe they should consider these ideas. —Bruce Fretts**

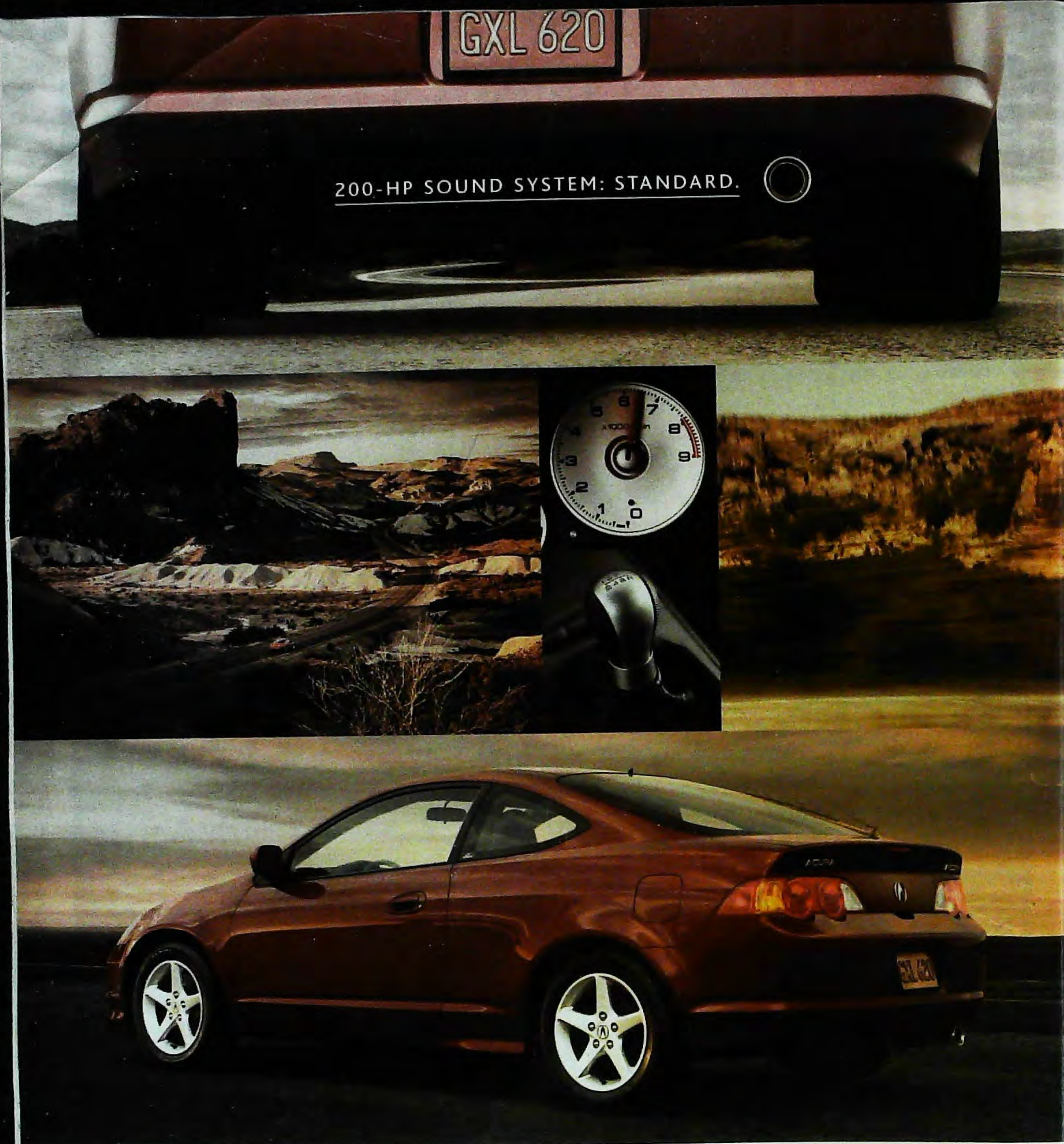


PERRY

but he's voted off in the first episode after his stash of meatball subs is discovered.

- As part of her ongoing image-rehab program, **Mariah Carey** drops by Central Perk and duets with Phoebe on "Smelly Cat."
- After accidentally impregnating girlfriend Mona, Ross gets married for a fourth time and immediately undergoes a vasectomy.
- Phoebe's triplets return to live with her—only now they're just twins, and they're played by **Mary-Kate** and **Ashley Olsen**.
- Rachel endures a serious case of postpartum depression and stops doing her hair, forcing an intervention by the gang.
- **Winona Ryder** returns as Rachel's sorority sister, who calls her for bail after a "misunderstanding" at Saks Fifth Avenue.





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# QUEASY RYDER

Why L.A. prosecutors threw the book at Winona. by Allison Hope Weiner

**T**HE MOST COVETED VIDEO in Hollywood isn't that Oscar screener of *The Lord of the Rings*—it's a Saks Fifth Avenue security tape of **Winona Ryder** from the day of her Dec. 12 bust for allegedly pocketing \$4,760 worth of high-end goods (including two **Judith Leiber** handbags and some pricey hair clips).

Due in part to evidence allegedly caught by security cameras, L.A. prosecutors took an unusually hard stance toward the two-time Oscar nominee, charging her Feb. 1 with four felonies: grand theft, commercial burglary, vandalism (apparently of security sensors on the items), and possession of a controlled substance. At her arraignment Feb. 5, Ryder, 30, pleaded not guilty to all charges. If convicted, she could face nearly four years in jail. That would end her age of innocence.

The aggressiveness of the L.A. district attorney's office stunned Hollywood's legal community. "I can't imagine any

worse situation for Ryder," says one high-profile defense attorney in L.A. "They've thrown the book at her. Either we're dealing with really incriminating evidence against her or someone's out to make an example. Post-**O.J.** [**Simpson**], no prosecutor in this city wants to be perceived as cutting anyone the slightest break because they're a celebrity."

Ryder's attorney, Mark Geragos, who has said his client had prescriptions for the drugs she was carrying and receipts for the merchandise, was similarly dumbstruck by the charges. "One would think it was Ma Barker involved as opposed to someone involved in something that would normally be treated as a misdemeanor," he says. "I don't believe for a second they can point to any other case where they've charged felony vandalism under these types of circumstances." (Ryder's publicist issued a statement on her behalf, deeming the charges "grossly exaggerated.")

Naturally, prosecutors see the matter differently. "She's charged with taking between \$4,000 and \$5,000 worth of merchandise from Saks," scoffs Sandi Gibbons, spokeswoman for the DA. "That's a little different than slipping a pair of socks from Sears into your purse. If you or I walked into Saks and walked out with that type of merchandise, we'd be charged with a felony."

Especially if it were caught on tape. According



CHARGED ATMOSPHERE (1) Ryder in court Jan. 10; (2) the Saks in question

to a source at Saks, store cameras captured Ryder clipping security tags off merchandise with scissors and cutting herself in the process, leaving bloodstains in the dressing room. "When you see that tape," the source says, "there's no doubt what she was doing."

Why would Ryder, who earns up to \$5 million per film, allegedly purloin two purses? One possible defense: psychological compulsion. "Celebrities don't shoplift because they need the material they're stealing; they do it for the thrill," says UCLA psychiatry prof Sanjaya Saxena, noting many shoplifters suffer from impulse-control disorder. "They have irresistible urges to steal, and get some sort of...high when they steal." Adds psychotherapist Linda Barnes: "There's an addictive quality to it. It's like alcoholism; it'll take on a life of its own."

While sticky-fingered stars are nothing new, Ryder is one of the few to actually be arrest-

ed for shoplifting. (In 1970, a pre-*Angels* **Farrah Fawcett** was twice arrested for shoplifting, and twice convicted and fined for a lesser charge of trespassing; 1945 Miss America **Bess Myerson** was fined \$100 after a 1988 shoplifting arrest in Williamsport, Pa.) More typically, authorities and stores look the other way. Says the manager of a Beverly Hills boutique, "The store doesn't want the publicity and would prefer to address the problem without involving the criminal justice system."

Ryder, who appears opposite **Adam Sandler** in June's *Mr. Deeds*, won't be so lucky. Her case moves forward with a March 11 hearing; no trial date has been set. Still, it could only be a matter of time before that dreaded tape surfaces in public. Says Gibbons, "If the case gets to preliminary hearing phase or trial, the tape *will* be shown in court." Sadly, that may become Ryder's most watched performance in years. ■



1 & 2: DAVID B. LUKMAN/ZUMA PRESS



# HOTSheet

What the country is talking about this week...

**1 Collateral Damage** Arnold Schwarzenegger fights terrorists. If you've got CNN, do you really need to go see this?

**2 Goldmember** The MPAA ruled it can't be the title of the new Austin Powers movie. It's now a toss-up between *In Her Majesty's Victoria's Secret* or *Thunderpole*.

**3 Friends** Rumor is they want a million dollars an episode for their ninth season. But the bad news is they'll get only 29 weeks off a year.

**4 Curling** Watch as much of it as you can. It'll be another four years before you see a man on TV pick up a broom.

**5 Catherine Zeta-Jones** She's the new model for Elizabeth Arden. Results for people who don't already look like Catherine Zeta-Jones may vary.



**6 Greta Van Susteren** She has the bags under her eyes removed and it's news. Sean Hannity has his brain removed and no one mentions it.

**7 Jesse Ventura** There are plans under way to bring a musical of his life to Broadway. I'd rather sit through *George Pataki* twice.

**8 Pamela Anderson** She announced that she soon plans to quit acting. How will we be able to tell?

**9 Valentine's Day** Roses are red, violets are blue, you forgot to get a gift, so what else is new?

**10 Freeze-dried pets** The latest bizarre trend is to have Fluffy frozen after death, not buried. The only question now is, do we wait till they die?

**11 Kelsey Grammer** A tabloid says the *Frasier* star has started taking a helicopter to work. But NBC always lets someone else land in his spot.

**12 Rollerball** A film that rails against all the violence on television. But it's okay to use it in movies like this.

**13 Big Fat Liar** A Hollywood producer is caught stealing a teenager's idea for a movie. So that's where *Slackers* came from.

**14 Bono** He's at the Super Bowl, he's tight with Bill Gates, he met with the Pope. And he can't afford new sunglasses?

**15 Celine Dion** She's returning to showbiz after two years of retirement. Yeah, it's hard to live on a fixed income.



FLAG ON THE PLAY U2's frontman shows his true colors in New Orleans

## PRO BONO WORK

IF **Britney Spears** LANDED \$1 million for her Pepsi-through-the-generations ads, how much did **U2's** rousing two-song Super Bowl stint cost the NFL? Not a thing.

According to a source, **Mariah Carey, Paul McCartney, and U2** didn't get a dime for their live performances



JACKSON

on the Feb. 3 telecast, though the NFL did pick up travel expenses (and it's not like these folks fly JetBlue). Interestingly, U2 weren't the NFL's first choice—**Janet Jackson** was reportedly booked for the halftime extravaganza. Then,

after the Sept. 11 attacks, a group of team owners and league officials visited New York City for NFL meetings and attended a U2 concert at Madison Square Garden.

Impressed by the socially conscious rockers and concerned about setting the right tone for Super Bowl festivities, they offered U2 the prime pre-Grammy gig—and in the process got a stadium-size bargain. Says one NFL insider: "We would have paid U2, but they didn't want any money." (The band's publicist had no comment.) —Josh Young

### More Celebrity Plastic Surgery



MAGUIRE

IF IT'S EVERY BOY'S DREAM TO BE A superhero, every actor wants his own superhero action figure. Although *Spider-Man* won't hit theaters until May, Tobey Maguire's already peeked at his six-inch plastic Peter Parker (due in stores this spring after debuting at this month's Toy Fair in New York City). His first reaction? "It's much smaller than I actually am," says Maguire, 26. While some actors request nips and tucks on their Mini-Mes (*The Lord of the Rings'* Elijah Wood asked for less hirsute feet on his Frodo toy), Maguire jokes he got the full Van Susteren. "My action figure had everything done!" —Gillian Flynn



Daily news and more Mullen at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com) (AOL Keyword: EW)

BONO: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM; JACKSON: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.COM; MAGUIRE: ALBERTO LOPEZ/ZUMA PRESS; ACTION FIGURE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY YENDE

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# Flashes



CAGE

SUVARI

**CAGE 'N' CRAZE** Mardi Gras is raging in New Orleans, but first-time director Nicolas Cage and *Sonny*'s cast didn't wait for Fat Tuesday to party. While Mena Suvari raves about Magazine Street's vintage

duds, and Brenda Blethyn the raw oysters, Harry Dean Stanton touts a simpler pleasure: "You can walk out of a bar with a drink and into another with the same drink." James Franco, who plays a prostitute in *Sonny*, coyly notes: "I spent a good bit of time on Bourbon Street, looking for sex workers for research." So grateful was Cage for all the local hospitality, last month he threw a French Quarter block party featuring a blues band and *cochon du lait* (roasted pig). "I always said that if I ever directed a film," says Cage, "I'd like to say thank you to the neighborhood." —Scott Jordan



LOPEZ, CLARK, BONADUCE

**THE 'HALF' OF IT** Admit it: The syndicated yakfest *The Other Half* is a guilty pleasure. So when *Dick Clark, Partridge* party boy **Danny Bonaduce**, and *Saved by the Bell* alum **Mario Lopez** visited New York City to tape segments, we took minutes: **NOON** At lunch, Mario observes that NYC women wear black because "there's so much dirt, you know, falling on them."

**1:20** Near MTV's midtown studio, *TRL*-ish girls squeal to Mario: "It's Slater! Where's Zack?" (Um, on *NYPD Blue*!)

**1:30** Times Square tourists are perplexed. "*The Other* what?"

**2:15** In a limo bound for a hair salon (where they're filming a bit on "real Brooklyn women"), Danny and Mario are asleep. Dick grumbles: "There I am at the American Music Awards...and I get a handwritten note from this one [Mario] asking [if he could] come backstage and meet **Michael Jackson**. I mean, *really*."

**4:00** Women at the salon either mob Mario or ask, "Are you gay?"

**5:00** While Mario peruses *YM*, Danny ruminates on talk shows: "They don't cure cancer. If you're having fun, the people watching are having fun. Believe me, we're having fun." —Caroline Kepnes

## EW CRIB SHEET

### CROSSROADS (1986)

Erstwhile Karate Kid Ralph Macchio is a musician traveling the South to contend with an evil force—the devil.

Macchio is joined by a vaguely criminal, slightly ornery older musician.

Macchio wins over a hostile crowd with his mean guitar riffs.

Macchio's well-honed guitarist cuts loose, losing his rigidity.

### CROSSROADS (2002)

Erstwhile Mouseketeer Britney Spears is a musician traveling the South to contend with an evil force—the record industry.

Spears is joined by a vaguely criminal, slightly horny older musician.

Spears wins over a hostile crowd with her lean midriff.

Spears' well-toned hottie cuts loose, losing her virginity. —Brian M. Raftery



**Q** Recently on *Real World Chicago*, Cara approached a rocker, kissed him, and joined him in a hotel room. MTV blurred his face. Who is he?

**A** The net ain't talking, but there's speculation it's Todd Park Mohr (inset) of Big Head Todd and the Monsters. Besides a resemblance, there's circumstantial evidence: On *World*, the stealth stud dons an Albums on the Hill record store T-shirt from the band's base, Boulder, Colo. "I think it's him," says Albums' Andy Schneidkraut. "Those guys have had T-shirts of mine for years." Mohr couldn't be reached, and BHTM's manager Mark Bliesener is mum: "My comment is 'no comment.'" —Steve Knopper (Send your queries to [BurningQuestions@ew.com](mailto:BurningQuestions@ew.com))

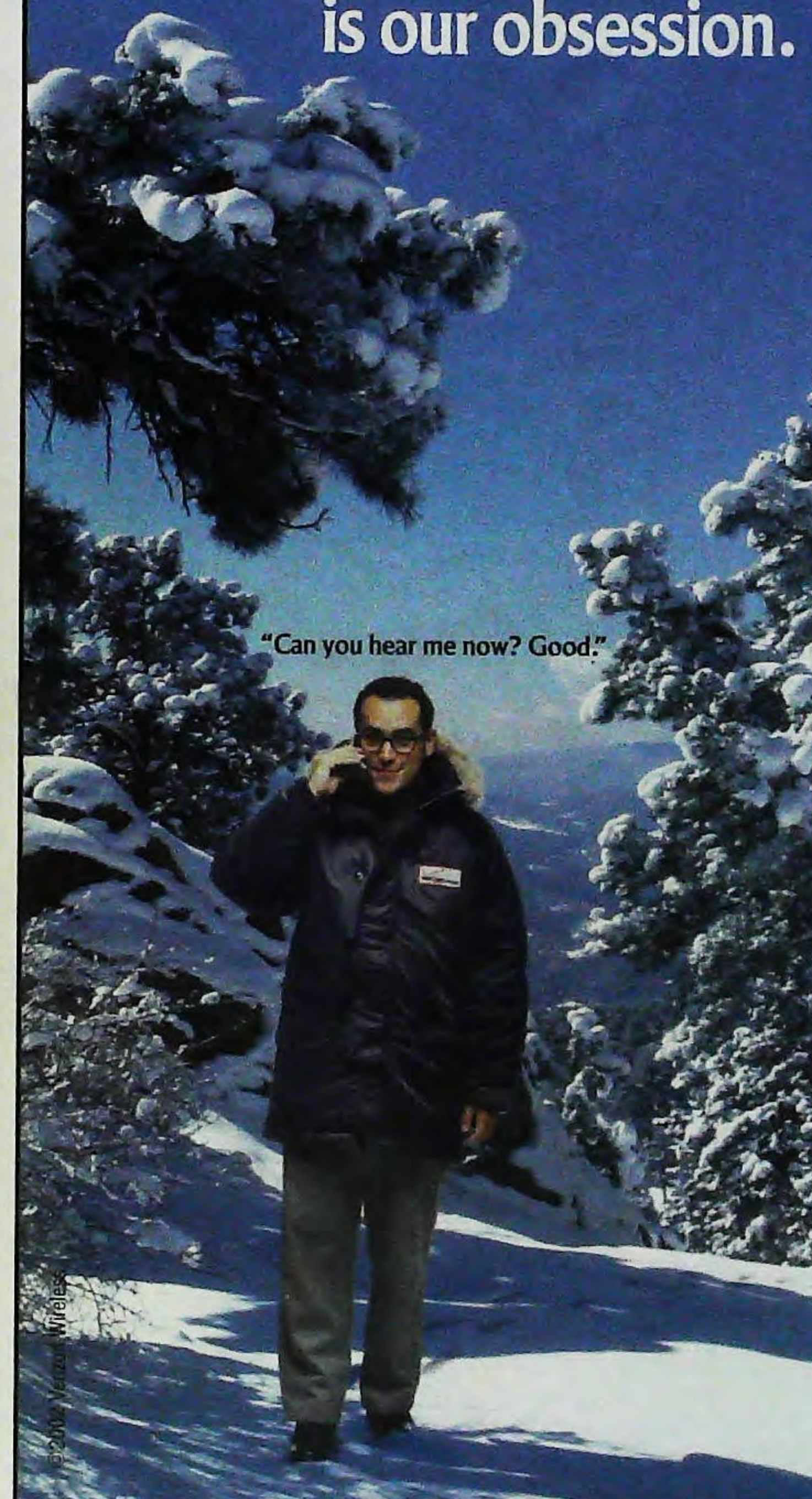
## random quote

"It would make me happy to see Sissy Spacek take it home to Virginia with her fine acting self."

—JULIA ROBERTS, on her choice for this year's Best Actress Oscar

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID COWLES

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## Valentines to the Stars

By B. Blitt



**Mike Tyson**  
Bloody noses are red,  
Facial bruises are blue.  
I'm writing these words  
A safe distance from you.



**Carson Daly**  
Your network show is applauded gaily,  
But you're no Johnny Carson Daly!



**Winona Ryder**  
You stole my heart  
You little shnook,  
But that doesn't mean  
That you're a crook.



**Mariah Carey**  
A valentine for a hot tomato,  
Who just got dropped like a hot potato.



**Drew Barrymore**  
Drew Barrymore, my heart is yours!  
I don't care if you marry bores.

## Monitor



NICOLE AND EDDIE MURPHY



RYAN

CARTER

**BIRTHS** On Jan. 29, **Shrek** donkey **Eddie Murphy**, 40, and homemaker wife **Nicole**, 33, welcomed their fifth child, 7-pound 6-ounce **Bella Zahra**.

**WEDDINGS** Second time **Charmed?** **Shannen Doherty**, 30, wed entrepreneur **Richard Solomon**, 29, Feb. 3 in Las Vegas. This is No. 2 for Doherty, who was wed briefly to **George Hamilton's** actor son, **Ashley**, in 1993. (Reports misidentified the hubby as *I Am Sam* producer **Richard Solomon**, who says, "My wife was sure surprised.")... Singer-actress **Brandy Norwood** (*Moesha*), 23, said Jan. 30 that she wed producer-songwriter **Robert Smith** (**Michael Jackson's** "Unbreakable") last summer. This is her first marriage.

**SPLITS** Welcome to Heart-break Hotel. Oscar winner **Nicolas Cage** (*Leaving Las Vegas*), 38, and rock royalty **Lisa Marie Presley**, 34, have stopped dating.

**COURTS** You've gotten nailed. On Feb. 4, an L.A. judge granted **Meg Ryan** (*Kate &*

*Leopold*), 40, a three-year restraining order against real estate agent **John Michael Hughes**, 30. In January, Hughes was arrested for trespassing when he allegedly was found at the Malibu home of **Andrea and Tomas Ryan** (no relation) and claimed to be waiting for the actress—whom he said was his fiancée. Hughes must stay 150 yards away from Ryan, her family, and the house where police found him. At press time, Hughes was still in custody.... He wants it this way. On Feb. 1, Backstreet Boy **Nick Carter**, 22—facing a misdemeanor charge of resisting an officer without violence in a Jan. 2 fracas outside Tampa's Pop City nightclub—reached a deal with prosecutors. If Carter serves three months' probation, apologizes to cops, logs 16 hours of community service, and pays a \$290 fine, officials say they'll drop the charge. Carter's spokesman had no comment.... Damn dusty film studio! On Jan. 29, *Planet of the Apes* remake extra **Jeffrey Clark**, 47, sued Fox Entertainment Group, claiming he and hundreds of others were exposed to a "known

carcinogen"—the powder used in a dust-storm scene. Clark seeks unspecified damages and medical treatment for the extras. Fox had no comment.

**DEATHS** Rugged actor **George Nader**, 80, who starred in B movies like 1953's *3-D Robot Monster* and penned 1978's pioneering gay-themed sci-fi novel *Chrome*, of cardiopulmonary failure, Feb. 4, in Woodland Hills, Calif.... Grammy-winning gospel giant **James Blackwood**, 82, of complications from a stroke, Feb. 3, in Memphis. Elvis Presley was a fan.... German actress and singer **Hildegard Knef** (1952's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*), 76, dubbed "the thinking man's Marlene Dietrich," of a lung infection, Feb. 1, in Berlin.... Oscar winner **Harold Russell**, 88, of a heart attack, Jan. 29, in Needham, Mass. (See Legacy on page 46.)... **Sheldon Allman**, 77, the singing voice of *Mister Ed*, of cardiac arrest, Jan. 22, in Culver City, Calif. Allman also acted in films including *In Cold Blood* and *Hud*, and cowrote *George of the Jungle's* theme. —Nicholas Fonseca

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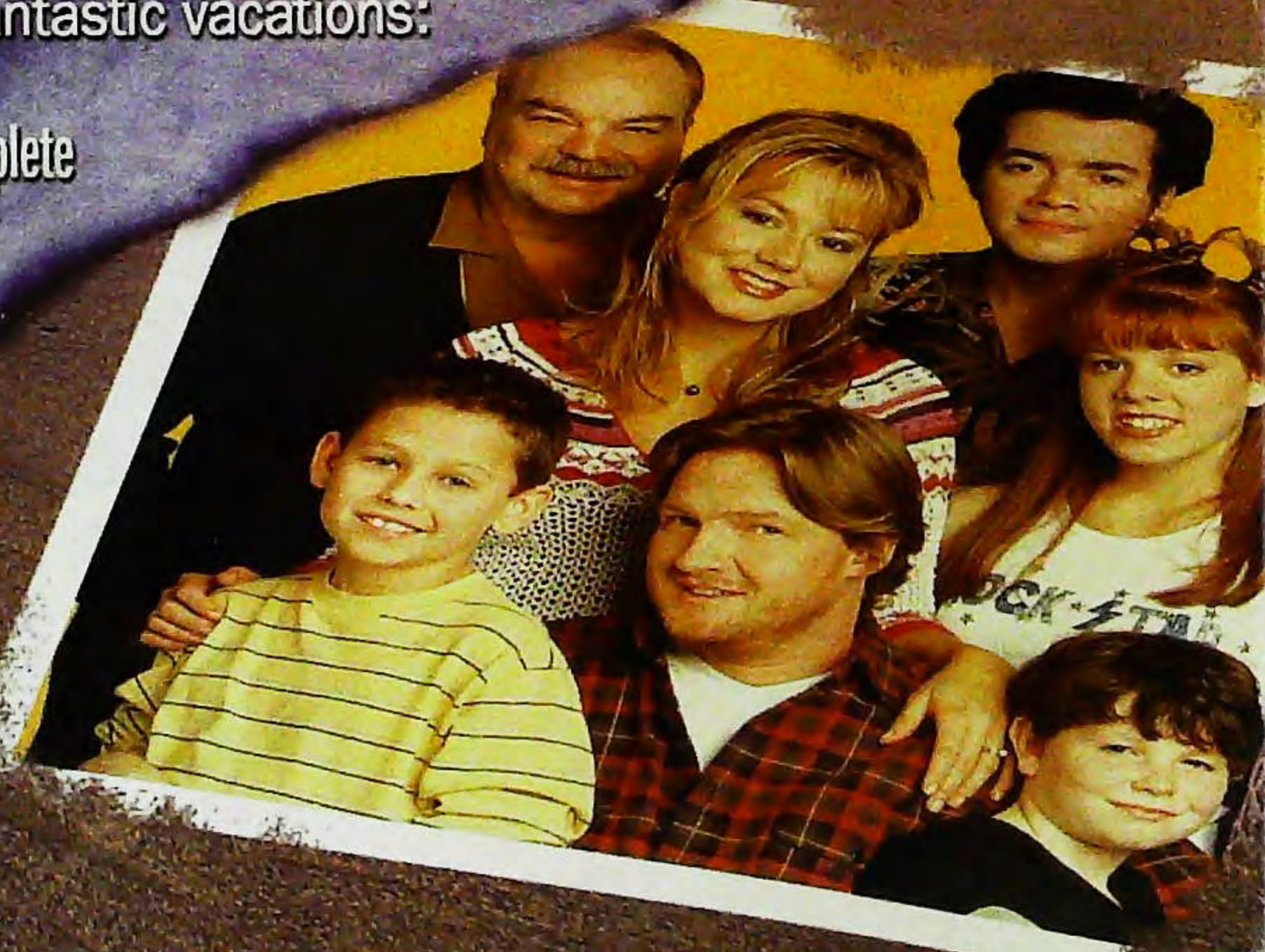
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## The SCOUT

EW'S FIELD GUIDE TO THE NEXT NEW THINGS



### Heart Day

Coupled or not, no one escapes the annual marketing coup that is Valentine's Day. But if you want to get your crush something beyond the standard roses and Russell Stover, the Love Bag is the trinket. The scarlet beanbag coos phrases like "You're gorgeous!" and was Kevin Spacey's gift to his mom. "Giving

and receiving love is what makes the world go round," declares inventor Simon Pithie (\$10 at NYC's Room Interior Products, 866-ROOM-NYC). If talking knickknacks aren't your thing, there are chocolate-covered Oreos, available at [redenvelope.com](http://redenvelope.com) (\$34 for 24 pieces, 877-733-3683). For old-schoolers, Necco Conversation Hearts have sassy new messages for 2002, including our favorite, "URA QT" (about 99 cents for eight ounces at retailers nationwide). —Clarissa Cruz

### THE SHAW REPORT by Jessica Shaw

IN	FIVE MINUTES AGO	OUT
Fried herbs	Fried calamari	Fried mozzarella sticks
Glam Chelsea	Oxford Chelsea	Gawky Chelsea
Seeing movies alone	Preordering tickets	\$2 theaters
Bora Bora	Tora Bora	Walla Walla

### Brown Ambition

Blondes may have more fun, but in Hollywood, they don't seem to mind going brunette. Jodie Foster, Cameron Diaz, and Gwyneth Paltrow have all headed brown for various roles. Below, artistic director of Avon Salon & Spa Brad Johns comments on the latest bunch turning to the dark side. —Missy Schwartz

#### MANDY MOORE, 'A WALK TO REMEMBER'

Bring out da frump! To play straight arrow Jamie Sullivan, Moore traded her sexy goldilocks for a chocolate plain-Jane 'do. "She's okay dark," says Johns. "It makes her look girl-next-door." Bingo! Says Mandy on staying dark after the shoot: "It just feels right."



#### NICOLE KIDMAN, 'BIRTHDAY GIRL'

Though Nicole's Russian mail-order bride Nadia seems to work a shy, ordinary-girl look similar to Moore's, the roots of the color change are of a darker nature: Nadia's a lady with a past. "She looks mysterious," notes Johns. "But [Nicole] should be red. I don't like her dark."



#### CATE BLANCHETT, 'CHARLOTTE GRAY'

Here, the color is woven into the plot: Light-haired Charlotte goes Incognito chestnut brown when she joins the French Resistance. Expert's verdict? "Honey, Cate Blanchett is so gorgeous. She can have any color." And has: red in *Bandits*; platinum in *The Lord of the Rings*.



### GIMME SHELTER



Slayer's lair! 5 BR, 7 BTH traditional-style home in Sherman Oaks PRICE \$2.2 million. Stake your

claim! Sarah Michelle Gellar is selling the Los Angeles abode that she purchased two years ago. Built in 1942, the one-story, 4,000-square-foot gated home features a motor court, pool, and spa, as well as a study, two fireplaces, and a gourmet kitchen. Meanwhile, Gellar's fiancé and *Scooby-Doo* castmate Freddie Prinze Jr. is also selling his home of less than two years. His 5,000-square-foot Spanish-style estate is on the market for \$3.3 million and offers two oversize master suites. (Prudential John Aaroe's Monty Icceman has both listings.) The couple has moved in together at one of their residences on the Westside. —Tricia Johnson

### Makeover of the Week

There's nothing conservative about Greta Van Susteren's recent cosmetic surgery. L.A. plastic surgeon Robert Applebaum estimates that the Fox anchor's new look cost up to \$18,000. Since the work might be considered a business expense, is it tax deductible? An Ernst & Young spokesperson says no go, "because it's not directly related to her job." Paula Zahn would certainly agree.

BEFORE



AFTER







# SPR

*Movie*  
PREVIEW

# ING

ILLUSTRATION BY  
JASON  
HOLLEY

RE: SPRING. FLOWERS RETURN TO BLOOM. College students revisit rowdy vacation spots. And after the January lull, Hollywood releases its first batch of "quality" movies—notably some hot potatoes whose openings were reconsidered after the Sept. 11 attacks. Expect the likes of Mel, Angelina, Eddie, Denzel, and Julia to reaffirm their star status. Then there's a new cast of characters, including The Rock and Britney Spears, all reimagining themselves on screen. Even fictional folk are getting into the act, with Blade, Jason, Peter Pan, and E.T. primed for—what else?—revivals.



# Cause FOR ALARM

**I**T SHOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD NEWS. MARCH 2001. David Fincher was five weeks into filming *Panic Room*, the director's follow-up to his controversial 1999 pitch-black comedy *Fight Club*, when his star Jodie Foster asked to speak privately with him and producer Cean Chaffin about an urgent matter. Fincher immediately began to worry. On paper, the new thriller, which pits a newly divorced woman and her 11-year-old daughter (Kristen Stewart) against three brutal burglars (Jared Leto, Forest Whitaker, and Dwight Yoakam) in the middle of the night might not have seemed so tough to make. But this is David Fincher, a filmmaker for whom the phrase "Let's do this the easy way" doesn't exist. And the creative course he had charted—to shoot in the near-dark, with swooping camera movements and intricately designed action sequences—left very little room for error. As Foster now puts it: "When you make decisions like that, which are so ambitious, you have to live with all the consequences and ramifications." Already, *Panic Room* had suffered one significant setback (the loss of its first leading lady); the last thing he wanted to hear was that he was about to have another.

"Jodie walks up," recalls Fincher, "and says, 'I've got some good news and some bad news.' And before she says anything more, Cean goes, 'You're pregnant! That's so great!' And I'm like—" Actually, Fincher's reaction was a blood-drained face of shell-shocked disbelief, which the director replicates almost a year later in a hotel suite in Beverly Hills on a January morning. Curled on the couch near him is Foster, wearing a smirk of bemusement and embarrassment. Fincher continues: "Great? What do you mean 'Great?' I think Cean had skipped over issues like scheduling, because as we walked away, she went, 'Oh, no.' And I went, 'Oh, yes.'" Fincher sighs. "Nothing went like it was supposed to on this movie. Literally. *Everything* f—ed up."

## WITH A CHANGE OF PLANS AND A BIG SURPRISE, JODIE FOSTER ENTERS PANIC ROOM

BY JEFF JENSEN

When Fincher's agent first told him about *Panic Room*, he didn't think the 39-year-old filmmaker would be interested. Not that the project wasn't a hot property; the screenplay by David Koepp (*Spider-Man*, *Jurassic Park*)—inspired by reports of real "panic rooms," secret compartments where residents can hide during home invasions—had been purchased by Columbia Pictures for a reported \$4 million. No, the agent just assumed Fincher would find it *small*. Turns out that's exactly what Fincher wanted after *Fight Club*, with its 284 scenes and dozens of different locations. Upon reading the script, Fincher found himself thinking of another single-set suspense flick.

"*Rear Window* is one of my favorite cinematic experiences, *because* of the rigors of limitation," says Fincher. "I thought something like that would be kind of cool to do."

Initially, Fincher's idea of cool was to shoot the film in complete darkness. "You know," he chuckles, "eyes floating in the shadows." Alas, tests proved this approach unfeasible. Fincher then considered filming inside an existing townhouse, but he quickly realized he would need to build a four-story brownstone set to accommodate his technical requirements. One sequence follows the burglars' break-in with a single sustained shot (augmented with

computer animation) that glides down stairwells, in and out of keyholes, and through coffee-pot handles. "David Fincher is *insane*," laughs Leto, who also appeared in *Fight Club*. "He has a crew that's expected to do *truly* great things." Adds Foster: "Making a movie with David is like getting through World War II. It's not necessarily *fun*, but there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment when it's over."

It's likely that Nicole Kidman would have felt the same way. The *Moulin Rouge* actress had originally signed to star in *Panic Room*, but it became apparent 20 days into production that she had not fully recovered from a knee injury sustained while





filming that musical months earlier. In late January 2001, it was announced that Kidman couldn't continue. With the threat of a possible actors' strike looming, a replacement was needed ASAP.

Enter Jodie Foster, who was available—much to her dismay. The two-time Oscar-winning actress was set to spend early 2001 directing her third feature, *Flora Plum*, starring Russell Crowe and Claire Danes. But when Crowe seriously hurt himself during rehearsals, the project was scuttled. "We were up against that same strike. There was no possibility of recasting that quickly," says Foster, who's trying to revive the project. "It's an ensemble. It's period. It's a circus movie. There are a lot of challenges."

When *Panic Room* came calling, Foster, 39, had only one conflict. A week earlier, she had agreed to head the jury at the 2001 Cannes film festival. But Foster had few qualms about skipping Cannes for Fincher, a director she'd wanted to work with since his 1995 breakthrough, *Seven*. In fact, Foster was once set to star in Fincher's 1997 film *The Game*. How Sean Penn came to replace her is a matter she can't legally discuss; in 1996, the actress filed a reported \$14.5 million suit against PolyGram Filmed Entertainment and Propaganda Films over the flap, which was settled out of court. "David and I remained friends, and there were no hard feelings," says Foster. "Actually, we're in perfect agreement on the whole thing."

Unlike the rest of the cast, which had the benefit of six weeks' rehearsal, Foster had only two weeks to prepare before shooting resumed in February. Still, she says she had no problem connecting with the character of Meg, a recent divorcee trying to rebuild her life while raising a child scarred by parental warfare. "My siblings and I went through that with our mother, who had to deal with being bitter while shielding the child from it," says the actress, whose folks split up before she was born.

By all accounts, the transition went smoothly—until Foster announced her good news. "Of course, we were concerned," says Columbia chairman Amy Pascal. "This is an action movie. She's running and jumping and wielding a sledgehammer. But she said she could do it. And she did." Yet it wasn't easy. "First, there was the tank-top problem," says Foster, referring to the sleepwear she sports in the movie's first half. "At a certain point, my stomach and boobs were going to be so huge it would really be ridiculous. If it took longer," she laughs, "I was going to show up with a tank top that said 'F--- YOU!'"

Fincher couldn't meet Foster's deadline, though he was able to get her into a baggy sweater soon thereafter. The plot did help mitigate some logistical challenges presented by the actress' pregnancy, as Foster spends much of the film in that panic room, watching the burglars on video monitors. But the complexity of Fincher's enterprise slowed him down. For the sake of those mon-

itors, most of the scenes with the burglars had to be shot twice, from alternate angles and with different lighting schemes. Fincher was also plagued with a host of technical snafus: flooded sets, out-of-focus footage, faulty equipment. And that old gremlin creative differences led to the replacement of director of photography Darius Khondji (*The Beach*) with longtime Fincher crew member Conrad W. Hall, son of revered DP Conrad L. Hall (*American Beauty*).

Perfectionism and complications drove production into July. By this time, Foster was suffering from a sprained hip due to distended ligaments (a common pregnancy malady). One of her final scenes was the walking-and-talking opening sequence, which she valiantly attempted wearing a cashmere coat and using a large purse to hide her swollen belly. "We were on the phone with Columbia going 'This is bulls—, Jodie looks like a f---ing crack whore, all sweaty and strung-out,'" says Fincher. "It was just ridiculous."

Columbia agreed. Fincher adjourned cast and crew, and on Sept. 29, Foster gave birth to her second child, Kit. (As she did after the birth of her other son, Charles, now 3, she declines to discuss paternity.) Last fall—as news broke that Fincher was planning to form a filmmaking collective with directors Steven Soderbergh, Spike Jonze, Sam Mendes, and Alexander Payne (nothing official yet, says Fincher)—*Panic Room* reconvened for reshoots and additional photography. And there could have been even more. After a recent test screening, Columbia asked Fincher (who has final cut) to consider an alternate ending. Fincher grudgingly agreed but warned the studio it

would cost \$3.5 million to rebuild the set. Columbia withdrew the suggestion. "In the end," says Fincher, "cheaper minds prevailed."

Remarkably, the finished film, in theaters March 29, reveals few traces of the trauma. Pascal, clearly, is thrilled. "He's a demanding filmmaker," she says. "But if you want to work with guys like that, you get the goods—and everything else that comes with it."

As for Foster, the Hollywood hyphenate is reading scripts and actually plans to decrease her activity as producer. "The people who reap the great rewards from producing are the people who produced *Titanic*, who can say, *See? I just made this amount of money*. I don't make movies like that," says Foster, whose latest effort, *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys*, recently premiered at Sundance. Looking back on *Panic Room*, she says, "It was really one of the most fun experiences I've ever had. I loved the technical challenge. I loved the physical challenge. I loved..." She laughs. "I loved not being bored."

Fincher snickers. "That's one thing you can say about it," he says. "It definitely wasn't boring." ■



FEAR FACTOR Kristen Stewart and Foster get into full *Panic* mode



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# The **ALIST**

## 25 MAIN ATTRACTIONS THAT ARE SPRINGING UP THIS SEASON

### *The* **SCORPION KING**

**STARRING** Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Michael Clarke Duncan, Steven Brand, Kelly Hu **WRITTEN BY** Jonathan Hales, Will Osborne, Stephen Sommers **DIRECTED BY** Chuck Russell

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**C**OULD THIS BE THE NEXT ACTION HERO? THE WWF champion put his enormous toe in the water last year with a supporting part in *The Mummy Returns* (in which he turned into a giant arachnid and got squished by Brendan Fraser). Now he'll reprise the role for a spin-off prequel set in 3000 B.C. "You get to see how my character rose to be a king," The Rock explains. "He starts out as an assassin, but then he sees that the gods have chosen him, so he has to go on this journey of discovery...." He wasn't going anywhere, though, without some acting lessons first. Larry Moss, who coached costar Duncan for *The Green Mile*, did a lot of the heavy lifting, but Russell (who directed another behemoth-turned-actor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, in 1996's *Eraser*) also helped The Rock get in touch with his inner core. "I'm not saying that he's Olivier," Russell says, "but he's one of the quickest studies I've ever met. He's willing to go wherever he has to go emotionally in order to give a full performance." **BOTTOM LINE** We can smell what Universal is cooking, and it appears to be a franchise. (April 19)

**WHAT IS THE BUZZ-O-METER?** It's a purely unscientific measure of a movie's heat. We've weighed industry chatter, audience anticipation, the trailer (if available), and ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY's own giddiness. It is *not* an indication of a film's quality, because in most cases your guess is as good as ours. Got that?

**BUZZ-O-METER** ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### **ROLLERBALL**

**STARRING** Chris Klein, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, LL Cool J, Jean Reno, Naveen Andrews **WRITTEN BY** Larry Ferguson, John Pogue **DIRECTED BY** John McTiernan

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**O**KAY, WE GET THE IDEA THAT SCI-FI FILMS ARE supposed to take place in the future. But maybe MGM's been taking that concept a little *too* seriously, since the release date of this remake of James Caan's 1975 death-sport actioner has been pushed around like a tackling dummy. Originally scheduled for last August, *Rollerball* stars Klein as a hunky loner who excels in a rock 'em-sock 'em arena sport where motorcycle-riding thugs pop wheelies and jawbones. "I wasn't even alive when the first *Rollerball* came out," says the 22-year-old actor, "but it's a killer film. For that time, it was the brink, so we've got a big challenge." It may be bigger than he thinks. Norman Jewison, who helmed the original, has reportedly bad-mouthed the new version. And after director McTiernan (*Die Hard*, *The Hunt for Red October*) screened an early cut of the remake for Ain't It Cool News' Harry Knowles—which the Internet movie guru proceeded to savage on his website—studio execs asked McTiernan to trim the movie's violence and nudity in order to earn a PG-13. In other words, we'll be seeing a *lot* less of Romijn-Stamos, who stripped down in a once-touted sauna scene. Not that *she* minds keeping her clothes on. "I mean, everyone's already seen that side of me," the sometime swimsuit model says. "They know what I look like." **BOTTOM LINE** The poster trumpets a "special appearance" by pop star Pink. Sure this isn't *Roller Boogie*? (Feb. 8)





## Blade 2

**STARRING** Wesley Snipes, Kris Kristofferson, Norman Reedus,

Leonor Varela, Ron Perlman **WRITTEN BY** David S. Goyer

**DIRECTED BY** Guillermo del Toro

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**T**HE POSTMODERN VAMPIRE IS JUST SOME CREATURE women want to be sucked by—think Tom Cruise or Brad Pitt,” says del Toro. “The vampire is something you should be horrified by.” With such strong feelings, del Toro readily agreed to his second foray into vampiredom (his first was 1993’s *Cronos*). But as shooting ended, someone slipped his star a garlic-and-holy-water cocktail. “It was the last day, the last fight scene, and I suffered an injury. First one in 39 years,” says Snipes. “We’d been doing 12 to 16 hours a day, six days a week for five months. I was coming out of a roll and felt this *twing!*” That *twing* in his knee was serious enough to relocate the shoot from Prague to L.A. while the star recovered. “We’re not mad at Prague, though,” laughs Snipes. “We didn’t have any difficulty finding people who look like vampires there.” **BOTTOM LINE** *Blade*, directed by Stephen Norrington, looked sharp, but del Toro could put real bite into this sequel. (March 22)

## COLLATERAL DAMAGE

**STARRING** Arnold Schwarzenegger, Francesca Neri, Elias Koteas,

John Leguizamo, John Turturro **WRITTEN BY** David and Peter

Griffiths **DIRECTED BY** Andrew Davis

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**T**HE TITLE REFERS TO THE WIFE AND SON OF FIREman Gordy Brewer (Schwarzenegger), who happen to be in the wrong place when Colombian terrorists bomb an L.A. consulate: Civilians aren’t the primary target, but they do get killed. The term also threat-

ened to become an epitaph when the movie was yanked from an Oct. 5 release slot in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Five months later, director Davis asserts that “not one frame” of the film—which has Brewer discovering that his terrorist nemesis has also lost a son, in a U.S.-orchestrated attack—was reshot or toned down. “It didn’t need any alteration,” says Davis. “The message is, violence begets violence. You create monsters by creating tragedy.” But how much room is there for conscientious debate in a flick filled with things blowing up and Arnold looking angry? “Andrew tried to make this much more complex,” says Leguizamo, who plays a motormouthed cocaine kingpin. “He had to deal with the studio and their idea of what a Schwarzenegger picture is about.” **BOTTOM LINE** Arnold says he wanted to stretch beyond pure action, but will audience expectations be so elastic? (Feb. 8)

## BIG TROUBLE

**STARRING** Tim Allen, Rene Russo, Stanley Tucci, Janeane Garofalo,

Johnny Knoxville **WRITTEN BY** Robert Ramsey, Matthew Stone

**DIRECTED BY** Barry Sonnenfeld

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**Y**OU MAY REMEMBER THAT SONNENFELD’S ENSEMBLE comedy based on the Dave Barry novel—about a high school game of “Killer” that ends up involving Mafia hitmen, the FBI, petty thieves, and a nuclear bomb on an airplane—was set for a Sept. 21 premiere.

But after the events of Sept. 11, a kooky, nukey romp suddenly wasn’t megaplex material. Turns out, though, that the words *bomb* and *airplane* were *Big Trouble*’s only tie to terrorism, and seven months’ time has moved the film from the front pages back onto the funny pages. “Humor is contextual,” says producer Tom Jacobson, who says nothing has been cut from the pre-Sept. 11 version. “It was just about the wrong time to release the movie.” (The new date inaugurates a Sonnenfeld season: His *Men in Black II* opens just three months later.) The large cast probably didn’t mind the delay: The multithreaded plot meant that, during the Miami shoot, the actors had much tropical downtime while waiting to be called for their scenes. “I had my kid and my family down there, and I’d get a phone call, ‘We need you at 6:30 tomorrow,’” remembers Allen. “There was a long pause, and then I’d say, ‘For what? Who is this? Oh, the movie, that’s right!’” **BOTTOM LINE** With this cast, any comedy could be worth the wait. (April 5)



SLICES OF LIFE  
(1) *Blade 2*’s Snipes;  
(2) *Big Trouble*’s  
Knoxville and Allen;  
(3) *Ice Age*’s critters

## ICE AGE

**STARRING THE VOICES OF** Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Denis

Leary, Goran Visnjic, Jack Black **WRITTEN BY** Michael Wilson,

Michael Berg, Peter Ackerman **DIRECTED BY** Chris Wedge

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**W**ITH DISNEY PARTNER PIXAR (*MONSTERS, INC.*) and DreamWorks-owned Pacific Data Images (*Shrek*) doing so well, is there room for another major computer-animation player? Fox, who teamed with Blue Sky Studios, certainly hopes so. After the debacle of the hand-drawn *Titan, A.E.*, execs are banking on the sleek CG look of *Ice Age* to lift the studio’s toon hex. After Wedge won an Oscar for the 1998 short *Bunny*, Fox greenlit his feature debut, the story of a woolly mammoth (Romano), a sloth (Leguizamo), and a saber-toothed tiger (Leary) who partner up to return a human infant to his tribe. But getting the narrative to work required some shaping. “A lot of scrutiny is given to this stuff because of the cost,” says Wedge, who declined to talk budget (industry estimates say it’s at least \$75 million). “The concepts are vetted exhaustively.” For instance, a subplot which found Leguizamo’s sloth cozying up to a couple of females got whittled down to just one scene. “It was too double entendre-y,” says Leguizamo. “It was hilarious, but kids weren’t laughing, and parents weren’t either.” Preview audiences seem universally tickled, however, by a mute little “scrat”—part squirrel, part rat—and its acorn-burying antics. **BOTTOM LINE** The trailer has generated major buzz, but can Fox market well to the kids? (March 15)

## CHANGING LANES

**STARRING** Ben Affleck, Samuel L. Jackson, Toni Collette, Amanda

Peel, William Hurt **WRITTEN BY** Chap Taylor, Michael Tolkin

**DIRECTED BY** Roger Michell

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**I**T’S KIND OF LIKE *FALLING DOWN*,” SAYS AFFLECK, “except more like a ’70s, Sidney Lumet version of that movie.” Indeed, though the plotline may borrow a bit from that 1993 Michael Douglas meltdown—lawyer (Affleck) and loser (Jackson) fender-bend in Manhattan, accidentally swap their extremely important attaché cases, and proceed to make each other’s lives miserable using courtrooms and banks as their battlegrounds—*Lanes* does offer something new. “Sam is doing the most unexpected thing because he’s playing a character who’s not cool at all,” says Michell (*Notting Hill*), returning for his first film since suffering a heart attack that forced him to abandon *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* during preproduction. “He’s this beaten-down guy trying desperately to get through this day. It’s very outside his normal repertoire.” Affleck’s character, the director says, “starts off as an arrogant rich guy in a silver Mercedes, but by the end of the film he’s intensely vulnerable.” All that twisting was what appealed most to Affleck. “It’s kind of an experiment: Can you make a movie where the audience’s loyalties go back and forth?” says the actor. “It doesn’t have the traditional protagonist who you know is going to triumph. It’s the antithesis to *Pearl Harbor*.” **BOTTOM LINE** Since you put it that way, Ben, we’re sold. (April 12)





BATTLES ROYALE (1) Smoochy's Norton; (2) Soldiers' Gibson; (3) Showtime's De Niro and Murphy

## Death to SMOOCHY

**STARRING** Robin Williams, Edward Norton, Catherine Keener, Jon Stewart

**WRITTEN BY** Adam Resnick **DIRECTED BY** Danny DeVito

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**E**VER WANTED TO STRANGLE BARNEY THE PURPLE dinosaur after one too many insipid sing-alongs? This could be the movie for you: a pitch-black comedy about the revenge exacted by kiddie-show host Rainbow Randolph (Williams) after he gets replaced by squeaky-clean rhino impersonator Smoochy (Norton). Says Williams of his fictional rival: "He's like a big, plush Sid & Marty Krofft reject." In other words, he must be destroyed. Working from an original script by Resnick (a *Larry Sanders Show* alum who also wrote *Cabin Boy* and *Lucky Numbers*), DeVito has returned to the vein of his nasty late-'80s comedies *The War of the Roses* and *Throw Momma From the Train*. "Danny's got that laugh, like a troll without a bridge," says Williams. "He'd just push it to get darker and crazier." Stewart, who plays a smarmy programming exec, says the story seemed to come from a personal place in Resnick. "He has a bit of a clown thing," Stewart deadpans. "Never play calliope music around him. He gets nauseous, starts panicking. 'Don't touch...bearded lady...stop!' It's terrible." And as Rainbow plots Smoochy's downfall, things get violent and four-letter words fly. "We had a great idea for the trailer," Williams reports. "It would say, 'We're all looking for a movie to take our children to. This is not that movie.'" **BOTTOM LINE** Schadenfreude comedy this extreme may be a tricky sell—though Williams' about-face from cuddly to pathological has piqued our interest. (March 29)

## We WERE SOLDIERS

**STARRING** Mel Gibson, Greg Kinnear, Sam Elliott, Barry Pepper,

Chris Klein **WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY** Randall Wallace

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**O**NCE AGAIN, HOLLYWOOD FLASHES BACK TO THE Vietnam War, though *We Were Soldiers*—based on an early battle that encouraged American military brass to believe that the conflict was winnable—unabashedly seeks to be less like *Platoon* and more like *Saving Private Ryan*. "If I was going to describe it, I would say it is savagely uncynical," says Wallace (*The Man in the Iron Mask*), who believes the movie has greater relevance in light of recent events. "September 11 reminded us that there are such things as duty, honor, and courage. This is a movie about such things." Gibson plays Lt. Col. Hal Moore, who in November 1965 found himself and about 400 of his men caught in an ambush by some 2,000 North Vietnamese soldiers. Wallace received cooperation from the U.S. military, though his six Vietnam-era Huey helicopters came from private donors. A political quagmire. A military operation gone awry. Helicopters. Didn't we just see this in *Black Hawk Down*? "It always happens," says Gibson, sighing. "It seems like you're in the arena all by yourself, but no sooner do you get there that you find that someone else is camping in your backyard. I don't know if it's industrial espionage or the collective unconscious." He laughs. "I suspect both." **BOTTOM LINE** *Black Hawk Down*, shot concurrently, may have stolen some of *Soldiers'* thunder—but the star's troops will likely come to his rescue. (March 1)

## The ROOKIE

**STARRING** Dennis Quaid, Rachel Griffiths, Jay Hernandez, Brian Cox

**WRITTEN BY** Mike Rich **DIRECTED BY** John Lee Hancock

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**I**T'S ENOUGH TO MAKE DUBYA PROUD: THE STAR, THE director, and the guy who inspired the story all have Texas in their blood. Quaid plays Jim Morris, a high school science teacher and baseball coach who strikes a deal with his team: If they win the championship, he'll try out for the majors. The surprise? At age 35, Morris signs with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and becomes the oldest major-league rookie in nearly 30 years. "I think we all place bets with ourselves," says Quaid. "[We say] if this happens, we'll try this or that. And that actually happened here—those kids had never won their district [before]." Director Hancock had no trouble relating to Morris' story. Not only had he played the game as a teen, his dad was a high school football coach who taught biology. "It's really a story about fathers and sons and second chances," Hancock says. "It became for me less similar to baseball movies and more similar to *The Last Picture Show* and *Hud* and other Texas movies." Hancock admits that having a Houston native in the lead was a relief. "I needed a guy who could wear Wrangler jeans and boots and not look funny and walk right in them." **BOTTOM LINE** Quaid tries for a hit on Kevin Costner's turf, but will it be closer to *Field of Dreams* or *For Love of the Game*? (March 29)

## STOLEN SUMMER

**STARRING** Aidan Quinn, Bonnie Hunt, Kevin Pollak, Brian Dennehy

**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY** Pete Jones

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**E**VEN THE MOST CASUAL VIEWER OF *PROJECT Greenlight*—the HBO show that follows contest winner Jones as he stumbles through his debut feature—knows that his 25-day shoot was rife with problems. But Jones and his cast insist the series accentuated the negative: "There was a lot of laughter, and we did make mistakes, but we really enjoyed ourselves," he says. "They don't show that." What they do show is Jones, whose previous on-set experience included gofer work on *Primary Colors*, filming the story of two Chicago kids—one Jewish, one Catholic—trying to make sense of their religions during the summer of '76. Though Miramax budgeted the film at \$1 million, Jones and producers Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, and Chris Moore pushed for more—and got another \$500,000. Jones says that at Sundance, studio co-chief Harvey Weinstein told him, "I can't believe you were a baby on the million dollars I gave you!" And he put his arm around me and said, "Good job. That's what good directors do. They fight for everything." But

would Quinn—who plays a fireman dad—fight to take part again? "If it was a role as good as this," he says. "And if they paid me for a change." **BOTTOM LINE** Curiosity alone will get us into theaters, but will the film be even half as much fun as the show? (March 22)

## SHOWTIME

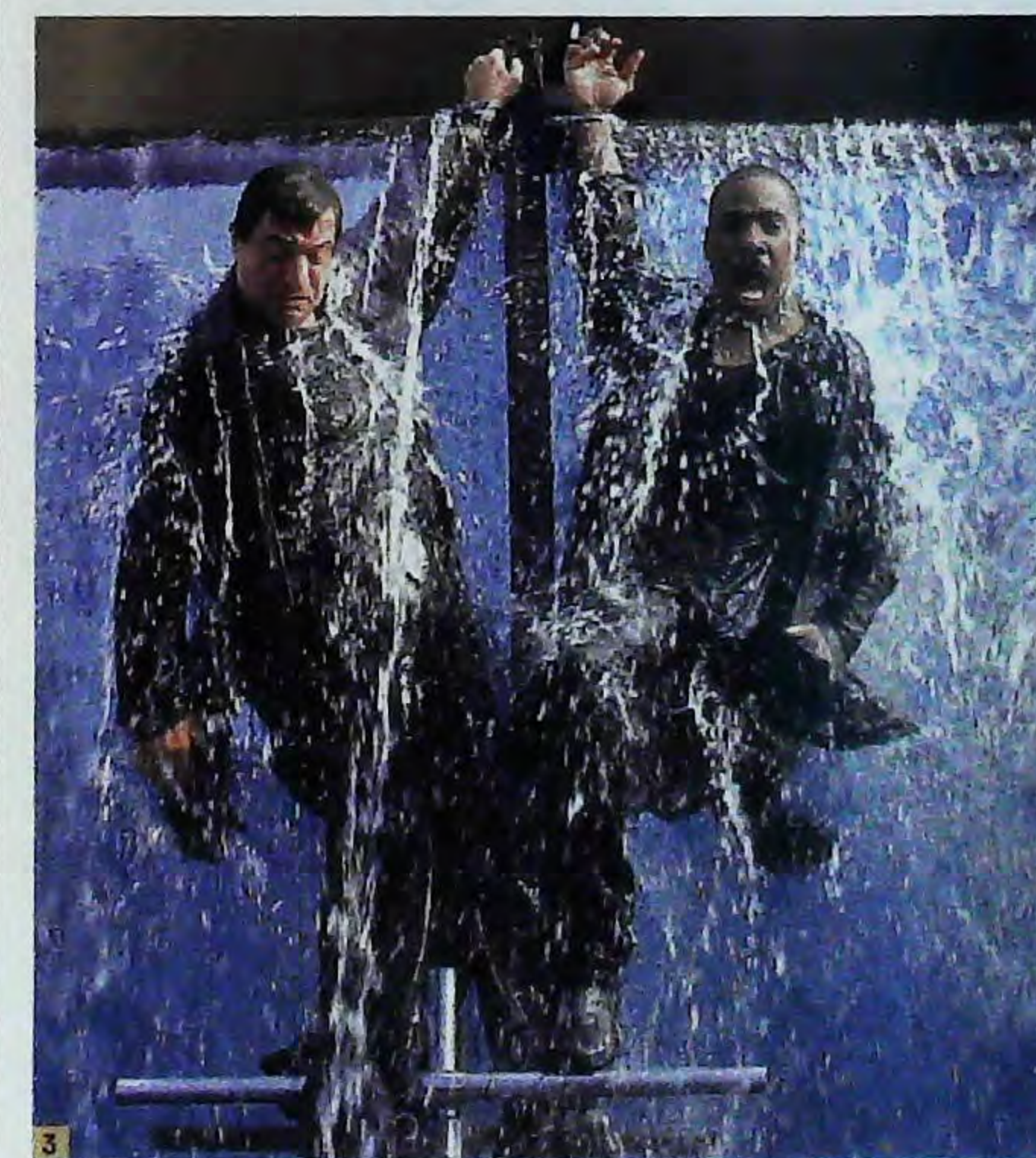
**STARRING** Robert De Niro, Eddie Murphy, Rene Russo, William

Shatner **WRITTEN BY** Alfred Gough, Miles Millar, Keith Sharon

**DIRECTED BY** Tom Dey

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**S**OMETIMES THE HARD STUFF COMES EASY AND THE easy stuff comes hard. Just look at the latest comedy from *Shanghai Noon*'s Dey. The director had little difficulty convincing box office titans De Niro and Murphy to costar as cops who are cast in a reality TV show. But finding the right woman to play their producer? "I wasn't the first choice," says Russo. "*Showtime* is in a lot of ways a goof on *Lethal Weapon* and I think people had concerns that because I was in *Lethal* that I wasn't right. And De Niro went to bat for me." So where does Shatner fit in? "They need to be instructed on how to be a cop for television, so they hire this guy Shatner," says the actor. "As the guy who played T.J. Hooker, I teach them how to be flashy." Ah, T.J.—seems like he'll never get through with schooling those new recruits. **BOTTOM LINE** Murphy and De Niro can be hilarious, but audiences may find a reality-show spoof about as fresh as a Yakov Smirnoff zinger. (March 15)





# MURDER BY NUMBERS

**STARRING** Sandra Bullock, Ben Chaplin, Ryan Gosling, Michael Pitt

**WRITTEN BY** Tony Gayton **DIRECTED BY** Barbet Schroeder

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**D**ON'T LOOK FOR BULLOCK TO SNORT, GUFFAW, OR pratfall this time around. "If you're going to take the plunge," says the actress, who's also executive producer, "take it as dramatically as possible." Bullock plays a troubled forensics specialist on the trail of two men (Gosling and Pitt) who believe they've committed the perfect murder. "On the outside, she looks very tough," Schroeder says of Bullock's character. "But in reality, she's hiding something very complex and fragile." That secret twists her take on the investigation. "What it comes down to is, if people don't deal with traumas in life, and push them way back in the recesses of the mind, they're going to show up every place else, whether they like it or not," Bullock says. "It taints everything she touches." Bullock pored over forensics books and FBI transcripts to learn the technology of criminal science, but she swears the flashiest action will take place in moviegoers' heads. "It's a mind game," she says, "which if you pull off properly is always so much fun to watch."

**BOTTOM LINE** Sounds intriguing, but it'll take a good ad campaign to get moviegoers to follow *Miss Congeniality* for a walk on the dark side. (April 19)



# KISSING JESSICA STEIN

**STARRING AND WRITTEN BY** Jennifer Westfeldt, Heather

Juergensen **DIRECTED BY** Charles Herman-Wurmfeld

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**B**EST BUDS WESTFELDT AND JUERGENSEN ORIGINALLY planned a theater piece when they developed the story of a neurotic journalist who, after dating every schmo in New York, decides to answer a personal ad written by a woman. But before it was ready for the big screen, it needed a new title. "For a long time," says director Herman-Wurmfeld, "it was called something I so hated that I was like, 'You know I've been chasing this project forever, but I won't direct a movie called *Seeking Same*.' I called it *Seeking Lane*." As in 1997's *Chasing Amy*, the team's decidedly contemporary romance, which plays with the idea of sexu-

ality as a choice, will certainly ruffle some feathers. But the two stars, both of whom currently have boyfriends, weren't freaked out by their graphic (and comical) love scenes. "We've had such an intense writing relationship that it's really not a big leap," says Juergensen. "It didn't strike me as anything weird." Seconds Westfeldt: "By the time we filmed the movie, we were like an old married couple." **BOTTOM LINE** The catchy concept could result in the season's sleeper hit. (March 15)

# FULL FRONTAL

**STARRING** Julia Roberts, David Duchovny, Blair Underwood

**WRITTEN BY** Coleman Hough **DIRECTED BY** Steven Soderbergh

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**H**E WANTED TO MAKE A FLICK FAST AND CHEAP. SO Soderbergh got digital cameras, set up a \$2 million, 18-day shoot in L.A., and banned all time- and budget-busting accoutrements, including limos and makeup artists. "I wanted to shoot a movie like [the TV show] *Cops*," says Soderbergh. "My girlfriend [E!'s Jules Asner] turned me on to it." The script, a sequel to Soderbergh's 1989 career-maker *sex, lies and videotape* only "in the karmic sense," follows new characters over 24 hours, as a magazine journalist (Roberts) shows up on set to interview a major movie star (Underwood). The pair shot their scenes together in five days, and Underwood reports, "We almost never worked past 5 or 6 o'clock. The whole process was streamlined"—except for extensive improvisations. Choosing a title involved some riffing too. The first choice, *How to Survive a Hotel Fire*, "just didn't seem very amusing after September 11," says Soderbergh. He's fond of his second choice, *The Art of Negotiating a Turn*, but it made Miramax honcho Harvey Weinstein so unhappy, Soderbergh says, "I thought he was going to do himself harm." **BOTTOM LINE** After *Erin Brockovich*, *Traffic*, and *Ocean's Eleven*, we'd go even if the title was *Steven Reads the Phone Book*. (March 8)



AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS  
(1) *Murder's* Bullock;  
(2) *Frontal's* Underwood  
and Roberts; (3) *Queen's*  
Aaliyah and Townsend

# QUEEN OF THE Damned

**STARRING** Aaliyah, Stuart Townsend, Marguerite Moreau, Vincent

Perez, Lena Olin **WRITTEN BY** Scott Abbott, Michael Petroni

**DIRECTED BY** Michael Rymer

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**A**ALIYAH, THE 22-YEAR-OLD SINGER WHO PLAYS 6,000-year-old royal vampire Akasha in the movie version of Anne Rice's novel, had already completed her role when her chartered plane crashed last August. "We were all in shock," says director Rymer (*In Too Deep*). "I knew how important her work was to her, so my response was to make her look as good in the film as we possibly could." In postproduction, the filmmakers enlisted Aaliyah's soundalike brother Rashad to smooth out any rough patches in her dialogue. "When we just finished [filming]," remembers Townsend, "before hardly anyone had seen it, there was this rumor on the Internet that [the movie] was going straight to video. So things were already kind of weird, and then Aaliyah died..." Despite its tragic pall, "I saw a very early cut and I think it's great fun," says the actor, who adds rock & roll cool to the Lestat character that Tom Cruise played in *Interview With the Vampire*. "It's sort of cheesy and camp, veering into *Rocky Horror Picture Show* territory. I vamp it up and Aaliyah is in the ultimate pop video, just strutting around, having a ball." **BOTTOM LINE** You have to wonder when the star calls his own film "cheesy," but Aaliyah's legion of fans won't likely be discouraged. (Feb. 22)

# DRAGONFLY

**STARRING** Kevin Costner, Kathy Bates, Linda Hunt, Joe Morton,

Ron Rifkin **WRITTEN BY** David Seltzer, Brandon Camp, Mike

Thompson **DIRECTED BY** Tom Shadyac

**BUZZ-O-METER** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**O**SCAR WINNERS COSTNER, BATES, AND HUNT JOIN forces in a supernatural drama...from the director of *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*! The story follows a grieving widower (Costner) who believes his wife is communicating with him through the near-death experiences of her pediatric cancer patients. Next-door neighbor Miriam (Bates) "thinks he's fabricating these things and it's getting psychotic," says the actress. "She's trying to keep him from straying into Wonderland." And how did Shadyac take on such an otherworldly project? "I'd been taking steps toward this [with *Patch Adams*]," the director says. "And the story moved me—when I told friends about it I couldn't not get goose bumps." When Shadyac journeyed to Costner's Aspen ranch, he knew he'd found his haunted spouse. "I needed [an actor] who was truly mature," he says. "And I saw that Kevin had had a really full life." The director dismisses concerns that *Dragonfly* will open SOA (swatted on arrival), thanks to January's similar *The Mothman Prophecies*: "Dragonfly isn't a horror film, it's an eerie film. Our stories are just different, and the audience will decide if it's better." **BOTTOM LINE** With Costner still on a cool streak, *Dragonfly's* best bet is a director whose past four flicks were blockbusters. (Feb. 22)







# THAT'S NOT ALL

A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO THE OTHER FILMS HEADED YOUR WAY

## FEBRUARY

### BIG BAD LOVE

Actor Arliss Howard (*The Lost World: Jurassic Park*) goes for the auteur triple crown: He cowrote, directed, and stars in this adaptation of short stories by Mississippi writer Larry Brown—about a downtrodden Mississippi writer named Leon Barlow. He's also brought some too-little-seen actors in from the cold, including Paul Le Mat, Angie Dickinson, and his wife, Debra Winger. (Feb. 22)

### BIG FAT LIAR

A sleazy Hollywood producer (Paul Giamatti) steals a kid's school paper and turns it into a hit film, prompting the kid (*Malcolm in the Middle*'s Frankie Muniz) to travel to L.A. in search of revenge and back-end points. (Feb. 8)

### LAST ORDERS

A group of aging Brits (including Bob Hoskins, David Hemmings, and Tom Courtenay) tour the pubs and recall their lives and loves after the passing of charismatic pal Michael Caine. *Roxanne*'s Fr  d Schepisi directs from Graham Swift's prize-winning novel. (Feb. 15)

### MEAN MACHINE

Sounds like Vinnie Jones, the British soccer star-turned-tough-guy actor (*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*), wants to become the Burt Reynolds of Blighty. His new movie, about an incarcerated soccer champ who coaches a



GUYS FIERCE (1) *Monsoon*'s Parvin Dabas; (2) Peter Pan; (3) *Scotland*'s Walken

prison team in a match against the guards, is a remake of Reynolds' 1974 hit *The Longest Yard*. Hey, it worked for Burt. (Feb. 22)

### MONSOON WEDDING

Think Altman's *A Wedding* set in the culture clash of modern India. Winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival, *Monsoon Wedding* is *Salaam Bombay!* director Mira Nair's wry look at the secrets and scandals plaguing the arranged union of an upper-class New Delhi bride and her Americanized groom. (Feb. 22)

### RETURN TO NEVER LAND

He said "I won't grow up," not "I won't go back." Disney extends a key franchise with this animated Peter Pan sequel set during the London Blitz. As if the Luftwaffe weren't bad enough, Captain Hook has kidnapped Wendy's cynical young daughter Jane. Can Peter

Pan make her believe in time to fly home from Never Land? (Feb. 15)

### SCOTLAND, PA.

Are you ready for a black-comic version of *Macbeth* set in a fast-food joint in rural Pennsylvania circa 1972? Actor-turned-writer-director Billy Morrisette hopes so; he's been carrying this idea around since his own McJob days. James Le Gros and Maura Tierney (Morrisette's wife) star as the ambitious, entrepreneurial couple Joe and Pat McBeth; Christopher Walken plays detective Ernie McDuff; Andy Dick, Amy Smart, and Timothy "Speed" Levitch are the Three Hippies. (Feb. 8)

### SCRATCH

Grand Mixer DXT, The Invisible Skratch Piklz, and other redoubtably monikered folks are the subjects of director Doug Pray's documentary peek into the hip-

hop DJ subculture. Pray, who deconstructed the Seattle grunge scene in 1996's *Hype!*, covers the bases from founding fathers Afrika Bambaataa and GrandWizzard Theodore to new kids DJ Relm and DJ Streak. (Feb. 15)

### SUPER TROOPERS

Sorry, ABBA fans, no close Swedish harmonies here, only *Police Academy*-style shenanigans from the comedy troupe Broken Lizard. A crew of slacker Vermont state troopers delight in pulling over stoned college students and playing pranks on the local cops. (Feb. 15)

## Plus

In **HOW TO KILL YOUR NEIGHBOR'S DOG** (which debuted on STARZ! last October), Kenneth Branagh is a struggling



TRIAL AND TERRORS (1) Judd, Caviezel, and Freeman fight *Crimes*; (2) *Evil*'s Jovovich has an undead reckoning time

## HIGH Crimes

STARRING Ashley Judd, Morgan Freeman, Jim Caviezel WRITTEN

BY Cary Bickley, Yuri Zeltser DIRECTED BY Carl Franklin

BUZZ-O-METER ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

MILITARY TRIBUNALS MAY BE A SUBJECT OF controversy in Washington, D.C., at the moment, but they'll always have a home in Hollywood. In this latest addition to the genre, Judd plays an Army attorney who defends her husband (Caviezel) when he's accused of committing war atrocities in El Salvador. "It's more of a thriller than a courtroom drama, since we really don't spend all that much time at the trial," elaborates Freeman, who's reuniting with his *Kiss the Girls* costar to play her cranky co-counsel. "But I do get to take out a few witnesses." He gave the director a hard time as well, at least until Judd explained to Franklin (*Devil in a Blue Dress*) how best to handle the actor. "Carl was a little in awe and didn't know how to deal with him," she explains. "So I told Carl that if he wanted Morgan to play a cantankerous hellion, then he should call him to the set 15 minutes before the cameras were ready and make him wait there on his mark. He'd get the character he wanted." **BOTTOM LINE** Both stars seem to rise to the occasion in thrillers (see *Double Jeopardy*, *Seven*, *Along Came a Spider*...). (April 5)

## RESIDENT EVIL

STARRING Milla Jovovich, Michelle Rodriguez, Eric Mabius, James

Purefoy WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY Paul Anderson

BUZZ-O-METER ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

IT'S A TERRIFYING IDEA, THAT YOUR FRIENDS AND loved ones come back from the dead and want to eat you alive," says director Anderson. Tell us about it! Such zombie zaniness is at the heart of this adaptation of the best-selling videogame series. While *Night of the Living*

*Dead*'s George Romero was once attached, Anderson possesses solid credentials (he also directed the arcade-inspired *Mortal Kombat*). His \$40 million vision? Jovovich leads a hit squad into an underground lab where a zombie virus is on the loose. Horror fans should anticipate "a couple of fantastic decapitations," says Anderson, as well as "undead Dobermans with some flesh hanging off of them." Meanwhile, expect ghoulish drooling over Jovovich, who describes her character as a "hot chick in a miniskirt." But stalkers beware: "I've gotten a bad habit of shooting guns now," she says. "Indoor shooting range, of course. I really love guns." Finally, a film that freaks and geeks and NRA members can enjoy. **BOTTOM LINE** Jovovich could be a knife collection away from becoming the next Angelina Jolie. (March 15)

## HART'S WAR

STARRING Bruce Willis, Colin Farrell, Terrence Howard WRITTEN

BY Terry George, Billy Ray DIRECTED BY Gregory Hoblit

BUZZ-O-METER ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

POP PATRIOTISM DOESN'T DO MUCH FOR HOBLIT. "But in terms of honest and true patriotism, I'm all there," the director says. "And this movie is certainly about men in uniform who seek honor in the face of unspeakable circumstances." Willis plays an American colonel in a German POW camp whose grim makeshift community is rocked by racism and murder. To capture the bleakness of space and spirit, the movie was filmed in winter at an old Russian army base outside Prague. "It was brutal," says Hoblit. "Bruce Willis would say, 'I get depressed every time I come out here.'" "It was really tough," concurs Farrell, who plays a prisoner assigned to defend the accused murderer. "But at the end of the day, we're all just f---ing playactors with heated trailers and weekends in town. To actually have been there and gone through the harrowing experience is unimaginable." **BOTTOM LINE** Business was strong for *Black Hawk Down* and *Behind Enemy Lines*, but with this and the upcoming *We Were Soldiers*, will audiences start to feel like prisoners of war movies? (Feb. 15)





FACE TIME (1) E.T. and Henry Thomas; (2) *Clockstoppers*' Bradford and Paula Garcés; and (3) *Harrison's Flowers*' MacDowell



L.A. playwright trying to start a family with wife Robin Wright Penn and combat life's obstacles along the way.... The documentary **REVOLUTION OS** chronicles the creation of the alternative, free Linux computer operating system.... A Manhattan family's quiet weekend vacation turns ominous when a psychotic deer hunter shows up in **WENDIGO**.... And the apocalyptic comedy **THE LAST MAN** finds the remaining pair of earth-dudes competing for the affections of *Boston Public's* Jeri Ryan.

## MARCH

### ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS

If you like your urban comedies (Ice) Cubed, this Miami-set caper about a bounty hunter and his

bail-jumping quarry teaming up to catch some bad(der) guys qualifies twice, having been coproduced and cowritten by the rapper. It also reunites him with his *Next Friday* costar Mike Epps. (March 8)

### BORSTAL BOY

Brendan Behan: the early years. In this drama based on the Irish playwright/activist's memoirs, Shawn Hatossy (*Down to You*) stars as a teenage Behan sent to reform school during World War II for participating in a bomb plot. While there, he must learn to come to terms with the rest of humanity—even the British part. (March 1)

### CLOCKSTOPPERS

So you've got a watch that effectively stops time. And that's good.

But French Stewart is after you. And that's really, really bad. Such is the dilemma of teen hero Zak (Jesse Bradford) when he pilfers his dad's invention and goes on the requisite wild adventure. *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* Jonathan Frakes directs this Nickelodeon sci-fi action comedy, which, shockingly enough, is *not* based on an acclaimed short story by Philip K. Dick. (March 29)

### E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL: THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

America's favorite squat, cuddly alien with bad skin is back—and no, we're not talking about ALF or Manuel Noriega. Digitally cleaned (and sanitized of firearms), the new print will feature never-before-seen footage, which we hope will help explain E.T.'s

presence in the Galactic Senate of *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*. (March 22)

### 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS

Let's see, Josh Hartnett is going without sex for *more than a month*? Screw! That's the premise of this romantic comedy from director Michael Lehmann (*Heathers*...and *Hudson Hawk*). In a just-been-dumped funk, Hartnett's Romeo abstains for Lent; so, naturally, the girl of his dreams picks this moment to saunter into his life, raising important issues of religious faith and free will. Or not. (March 1)

### HARRISON'S FLOWERS

It's Charlotte Gray in *No Man's Land* when the wife of a missing war photographer (David Strathairn) heads to the battle-scarred Balkans to find him—a quest complicated by the fact that the war has entered its most violent phase. Andie MacDowell stars. (March 15)

### LUCKY BREAK

Imagine a cross between *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Waiting for Guffman*. Impossible? Not if you're director Peter Cattaneo (*The Full Monty*), who did such a fine job getting Tom Wilkinson, Mark Addy, and Robert Carlyle to shimmy. In this one, a gang of jailbirds stages a musical as—quite literally—escapist entertainment. (late March)

### NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VAN WILDER

Mr. Popularity and permanent undergrad (Ryan Reynolds) is forced to turn party planner when his father cuts him off. Nice to see that the *Lampoon* name is still for sale. (March 22)

### NO SUCH THING

A misanthropic monster (Robert John Burke) makes friends with an ingenious journalist (Sarah Polley) in an update of *Beauty and the*

*Beast* by Hal Hartley. Still not quirky enough for you? Okay, how's this: It's set in *Iceland*. British Brahmins Julie Christie and Helen Mirren also star. (March 29)

### SORORITY BOYS

There are characters named Doofer and Big Johnson. The premise is *Bosom Buddies* meets... well, *Bosom Buddies*: Three college cads (*Smallville's* Michael Rosenbaum, *7th Heaven's* Barry Watson, and *Half Baked's* Harland Williams) solve their housing crisis by posing as sorority girls. All goes well until one of them falls in love with the Alpha sister (Melissa Sagemiller). (March 22)

### TROUBLE EVERY DAY

Graphic sex and cannibalism pepper director Claire Denis' thriller starring Vincent Gallo and Beatrice Dalle and was in the running for a Golden Bayard at the Namur International Festival of French Film. Whatever *that* is. (March 1)

### UNDISPUTED

Ving Rhames was in training to play pugilist Sonny Liston in *Night Train*. But when that biopic stalled, he hopped aboard this drama about a boxer jailed at the top of his game who's forced to face down the prison champ (Wesley Snipes). Calling the bout is director Walter Hill, who mastered the art of stylish grit with *The Warriors* and *48 HRS.* (March 8)

## Plus

The month features a grand tour of movies set around the globe. **I GIANT LEAP** celebrates humankind's diversity through assorted images of life on earth, various musical styles, and interviews with the likes of Michael Stipe and Dennis Hopper.... Ron Silver and Greta Scacchi star in **FESTIVAL IN CANNES**, Henry Jaglom's look at love and business at the

annual gathering on the French Riviera.... A Protestant minister has an affair with a 20-year-old woman during World War I in director Olivier Assayas' **LES DESTINÉES**.... Also from France, an out-of-work executive fabricates a new job for himself in the psychological drama **TIME OUT**.... The Israeli import **YELLOW ASPHALT** presents three vignettes about the relationship between Jews and their Bedouin neighbors.... The documentary **PROMISES** looks at the lives of seven Jerusalem children caught up in the ongoing Israeli-

Palestinian conflict.... An average Joe becomes the most popular guy in the hood when he discovers loot from an armored-car robbery in **FOR DA LOVE OF MONEY**.... In the documentary **THE KOMEDI-ANT**, a Yiddish vaudeville troupe journeys from Poland to New York.... **PAULINE & PAULETTE** traces the bittersweet relationship between Belgian sisters of advanced age—one a small-town opera diva, the other mentally retarded.... Jonathan Pryce and *Six Feet Under's* Rachel Griffiths test their vocal cords in the Wales-set musical **VERY ANNIE MARY**....

Fugees rapper Pras stars in **HIGHER ED**, a comedy about a track star who's introduced to the wacky world of weed.... Nineteenth-century London problem child **ESTHER KAHN** uses acting as a means of leaving the sweatshop where she toils.... An Indian-American college student must live a double life in order to keep his parents from finding out his true interests in **AMERICAN CHAI**.... And two lustful boys accompany a sexy older woman on a road trip in Alfonso Cuarón's comedy **Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN**, Mexico's all-time box office champ.



PAIR PLAY (1) *No Such Thing's* Burke and Polley; (2) *40 Days'* Hartnett and Shannyn Sossamon; and (3) *Benjamins'* Cube and Epps





# APRIL

## THE ACCIDENTAL SPY

This latest Hong Kong import offers a twist on the old Jackie-Chan-as-gym-equipment-vendor-and-possible-long-lost-heir-of-rich-Korean-business-man formula. Apparently, a few things *will* get lost in the State-side translation, including a reference to a deadly narcotic called...anthrax II. Yikes. (April 5)

## THE CAT'S MEOW

*The Last Picture Show*'s Peter Bogdanovich hopes for an artis-

tic comeback with this ensemble period whodunit (hey, the formula worked for *Gosford Park*) about an unsolved murder aboard the yacht of William Randolph Hearst. Edward Herrmann, Cary Elwes, Kirsten Dunst, Eddie Izzard, and Jennifer Tilly star. (April 5)

## CHELSEA WALLS

Think *Four Rooms* meets *New York Stories* meets the joint where Dylan Thomas lived. For his feature-directing debut, Ethan Hawke juggles more than 20 actors in five vignettes shot at Manhattan's famed Hotel Chelsea. (April 19)

## CRUSH

*Four Weddings and a Funeral* star Andie MacDowell returns to England. As a fortysomething who applies a bit of body English to a younger man (*Elizabeth*'s Kenny Doughty), MacDowell induces chagrin in her loveless middle-aged buds. But we'll show up just to hear her suppress her Southern accent. (April 5)

## DEUCES WILD

Good news: Martin Scorsese is the executive producer. Worrisome news: The '50s-era drama, starring Stephen Dorff—about dueling Brooklyn street gangs the Deuces

and the Vipers—has been on the shelf since 2000. (April 26)

## DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS

Director Stacy Peralta's 2001 Sundance Audience Award-winning documentary tells the story of the Zephyrs, the West Coast '70s skateboard crew who paved the way for extreme skating. Narrated by Jeff Spicoli—er, Sean Penn. (April 26)

## ENIGMA

Seeking that hard-to-find hybrid of *A Beautiful Mind* and *U-571*? Try this adaptation of Robert Harris' best-selling novel, starring *M.I.-2*'s Dougray Scott as a British mathematician tapped to break Nazi U-boat codes. Also headlining are Kate Winslet and Jeremy Northam, but note the star wattage behind the camera: Michael Apted (*The World Is Not Enough*) directs a script by Tom Stoppard (*Shakespeare in Love*), while Mick Jagger and Lorne Michaels produce. (April 19)

## FRAILTY

Told in flashback, Bill Paxton's directorial debut concerns a young boy who must decide whether his ax-wielding, demon-slaying pop is a hero, a villain, or just some guy who's watched way too many *Buffy* reruns on the FX channel. Paxton and his *U-571* (that movie again!) pal Matthew McConaughey star. (April 12)

## FRANK MCKLUSKY, C.I.

Dave Sheridan (*Corky Romano*, MTV's *Buzzkill*) plays an overly cautious insurance-claims investigator who's forced to change his risk-free policy when his partner is killed. Is hilarity ensured? Check your premiums. (April 26)

## HUMAN NATURE

He's crawled inside the bald head of a thespian, but now things are getting hairy for *Being John Malkovich* scribe Charlie Kaufman. His new surreal comedy features, among

other things, a beautiful hirsute woman (Patricia Arquette) and a scientist (Tim Robbins) attempting to civilize a recently discovered wild man (*Notting Hill*'s Rhys Ifans). Directed by first-timer Michel Gondry, the *homme* behind those Björk videos. (April 12)

## IN PRAISE OF LOVE (ELOGE DE L'AMOUR)

Love is still a many splendored thing. New-waver Jean-Luc Godard examines three couples' relationships over two years, with a visual switcheroo depicting today's Paris in black and white, while the past is shot in digital color. (April 19)

## JASON X

When we last left psycho killer and Stanley Cup hopeful Jason Voorhees, he was...where again? Hell? New York? Does it matter? The important thing is, he's back. Again. And we have no idea why or how. (April 26)

## THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

Bad-boy producer Robert Evans (*Chinatown*, *The Cotton Club*) narrates a documentary about his colorful career. A Sundance hit, with plenty of product placement for Bolivian marching powder. (April 19)

## KUNG FU SOCCER

The obligatory ragtag band of misfits—all versed in the ancient art of shaolin kung fu, naturally—try to kick their way to a soccer tourney's \$1 million grand prize. Reportedly Hong Kong's highest-grossing homegrown film ever. (April 5)

## LONE STAR STATE OF MIND

Joshua Jackson plays Earl, a good-natured Texas mechanic who finds himself up a creek without a Dawson after his girlfriend's lunthead cousin Junior (*Road Trip*'s DJ Qualls) gets caught in a pizza-delivery robbery gone awry. Further evidence of Hollywood's enduring respect for the heartland. (April 12)



WACKY PACK (1) *Spy*'s Chan; (2) *Human*'s Ifans and Miranda Otto; and (3) *C.I.*'s Sheridan, Randy Quaid, and Dolly Parton

## THE SALTON SEA

It's *The Usual (Drug) Suspects* in director D.J. Caruso's twisty thriller, in which a Mohawked undercover agent (Val Kilmer) finds himself immersed in the seamy underworld of crystal meth freaks. With Peter Sarsgaard (*Boys Don't Cry*) as a helpful addict, and Vincent D'Onofrio as a man without a nose. (April 26)

## SPACE STATION

He must have been feeling the need for light speed: Tom Cruise, in Carl Sagan mode, narrates IMAX's latest trip through the cosmos. (April 19)

## TRIUMPH OF LOVE

Director Clare Peploe's romantic comedy of manners (shot in Tuscany) stars Mira Sorvino as a princess out to restore the royal crown to its rightful owner—a sereniditously hunky prince. (April 12)

## Plus

An aspiring writer gains fame as a healer within Trinidad's Indian community in *THE MYSTIC MASSEUR*, Ismail Merchant's adaptation of Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul's novel... A lonely Viennese music professor (Isabelle Huppert) enters into an affair with a younger man in *THE*

*PIANO TEACHER*, winner of three top prizes at the 2001 Cannes festival... Argentina's *NINE QUEENS* tracks a pair of small-time con men looking for one last big score... A 30-year-old woman's dreams of marriage are almost answered when *Sex and the City*'s John Corbett pops the question in *MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING*... *MURDEROUS MAIDS* dramatizes the true story of two French sisters who, in 1933, killed their employer and her daughter... An overweight woman's marriage is tested when she joins a sumo-wrestling *SECRET SOCIETY*... The quasi-experimental Swedish movie *SONGS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR* provides a surreal commentary on human existence when mysterious events plague a small town... Jeff Bridges narrates the giant-screen dramatization *LEWIS & CLARK: GREAT JOURNEY WEST*... Acclaimed Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami examines the lives of suffering Ugandan children over 10 days in

the documentary *ABC AFRICA*... The friendship between two teens is tested when they spend a summer together in *GIRLS CAN'T SWIM*... *SOME BODY* details the sex, booze, and rock & roll adventures of an L.A. schoolteacher... A love triangle forms in small-town China when a major opera star arrives in *FLEEING BY NIGHT*... *MAMA AFRICA* features three stories, all directed by women, detailing the lives of African women... Martin Scorsese's rock documentary *THE LAST WALTZ* gets a spruced-up rerelease... So does Derek Jarman's 1986 biopic of Renaissance artist *CARAVAGGIO* (featuring *The Deep End*'s Tilda Swinton in an early role)... Piper Perabo (*Coyote Ugly*) is an exchange student who wins over a Texas town and steals the homecoming queen's thunder in *SLAP HER, SHE'S FRENCH*... And *American Movie* director Chris Smith returns with *HOME MOVIE*, which details the peculiar living circumstances of five U.S. families.

WRITTEN AND REPORTED BY Stewart Allen, Scott Brown, Ty Burr, Kelly Choi, Steve Daly, Amy Feitelberg, Daniel Fierman, Gillian Flynn, Jeff Jensen, Dave Karger, Allyssa Lee, Chris Nashawaty, Brian M. Raftery, Joshua Rich, Benjamin Svetkey, Karen Valby, and Josh Wolk

ALL RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE



THESE CHARMING MEN (1) *Sea*'s Kilmer, with Adam Goldberg; (2) *Frailty*'s Paxton; and (3) *Deuces Wild*'s Dorff and Brad Renfro





**HART'S AND MINDS**  
Farrell, Howard, and  
Willis soldier on



# The Race Canard

**Bruce Willis and Colin Farrell fight the Nazis in *Hart's War*. But who will save us from sappy message movies?** by Owen Gleiberman

ISN'T THERE SOMETHING wrong with the fact that in 2002, half a century after Sidney Poitier made his film debut, we're still getting paint-by-numbers liberal message movies that invite us to applaud ourselves for recognizing that black people and white people are the same under the skin? The television ads for *Hart's War*, starring Bruce Willis and his elegant facial furrows, would lead you to believe that

it's yet another in the current righteous wave of exploding-grenade combat epics (*Die Hard With a Venerable Cause?*). Actually, *Hart's War*, which takes place during the waning days of World War II, is set almost entirely in a German POW camp. It's an old-fashioned movie with a quaintly old-fashioned lesson to teach us. Think *The Bridge on the River*

*Kwai* as written by the committee to renominate Al Gore.

At the beginning, there's a token few minutes of graphic battle spectacle, as Tommy Hart (Colin Farrell), a fresh-faced young lieutenant who has virtually no experience in the field, gets ambushed and captured, then herded onto a train and marched through the snow into the camp's gates, at

which point a sneak attack by U.S. bombers graces the moment with a gratuitous crackle of photogenic destruction. Having gotten this action appetizer out of the way, the film settles down to its real agenda. Hart, due to a space shortage, is assigned by the camp's ranking American officer, a stoic toughie named Col. William McNamara (Willis), to live in a barracks crammed with lowly enlisted men. Colin Farrell, whose hair always looks a little *too* unmussed, is a bit glam for the period-war setting, but you're drawn to his slightly solemn air of concentration; he's like the world's most self-possessed Eagle Scout. His gears are churning in even the calmest, quietest scenes, and that's part of what makes a star.

## Hart's War

STARRING  
Bruce Willis  
Colin Farrell  
MGM  
RATED R  
125 MINUTES

Before long, Hart and the other men are joined by a pair of black Air Force pilots led by Lt. Lincoln A. Scott (Terrence Howard). These two have fought their way up the ranks of a military establishment that isn't exactly in the business of encouraging black recruits. If they don't say much, that's because it's clear that their presence isn't welcome. They're the odd inmates out, especially to Staff Sgt. Vic Bedford (Cole Hauser), a drawling racist who is not the least bit shy about tossing the word *nigger* around. The moment it popped out of his mouth, I flashed back to the shock I felt as a kid in 1967, when Telly Savalas, as the repulsive Bible-thumper Maggott, used it to insult Jim Brown in *The Dirty Dozen*. In a strange way, a part of me hoped that the new film would feature a comparable spice rack of peppery, disreputable characters, that maybe we were in for a boisterous update of *Stalag 17*.

*Hart's War*, I'm afraid, has no such frivolous ambitions. Directed, with lots of frozen-breath-in-the-floodlights atmosphere, by Gregory Hoblit (*Frequency*, *Primal Fear*), it is, instead, a grimly competent and stolid and earnest military courtroom drama. One of the American prisoners is killed in the middle of the night, an event that might appear to be terror as usual in a prison camp run by Third Reich goons. Nevertheless, Colonel McNamara persuades the commandant, Colonel Visser (Marcel Iures), a disarmingly courtly Nazi with whom he has an underground relationship, to have a tribunal assembled. Lieutenant Scott, who appears to have had a motive for the crime (plus, a knife was found under his mattress), is placed on trial for murder, and Hart, the senator's son who was

on his way to getting a Yale law degree before the war beckoned, is assigned to defend the helpless black soldier. Actually, let me rephrase that. What I meant to say is, the helpless black soldier *who has so much to teach us about courage and tolerance*.

A movie that bends over backwards to be "moral" may reveal its true morality in a way that it didn't intend. When Terrence Howard, who was so wily and charming in *The Best Man*, gets up on the witness stand and gives his big speech, the movie doesn't soar—it sags into cliché. *Hart's War* is structured so that the black man, ennobled by his fight against prejudice, preaches the lesson of self-sacrifice, a credo that ripples out among the white soldiers and allows them to accomplish the real mission behind the trial.

Yet what's actually being sacrificed here is the sense that an African-American character need be anything more than a symbol. It may seem harmless, to some, that our movies have never entirely abandoned the land of Poitier-ville, but as *Hart's War* demonstrates, it's an insult that they haven't. Making do with the occasional work of Spike Lee, the annual Oscar bait of an *Ali* or *Monster's Ball*, or Denzel Washington as the anti-Poitier in *Training Day* is no longer enough. When it comes to the treatment of race, Hollywood, despite such exceptions, now lags behind the rest of the country, trapped in a time warp of its own making, brandishing a mantle of tattered liberal sainthood that has never looked more like a chain. **B-**

## ReelWorld

News From Hollywood BY DANIEL FELDMAN

» **SOLARIS RISING** With *Full Frontal* (see page 32) just about finished, Steven Soderbergh has turned his attention to his remake of the 1972 Andrei Tarkovsky sci-fi flick *Solaris*. "We start shooting on May 1, but other than George Clooney it hasn't been cast," says the director, who wrote the script on spec for producer James Cameron. "And then I'm taking a break. [*Solaris*]



CLOONEY

is a culmination of a lot of things conceptually and technically for me, and it'll be a good movie to disappear after. I want to do a mini-Terrence Malick." And if you bought that, we've got a casino for you to rob. When pressed, the ultraproficient director admits he has a project to work on during his hiatus—an adaptation of the John Barth novel *The Sot-Weed Factor*. Well, that and watching reruns of Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's *Project Greenlight* series. "It's jaw-dropping. That's what most movies are like. I just sit there stunned—they're getting all the s---!" he says. "And the brilliance of it is that [*Stolen Summer*] isn't something I'd see without this documentary. Now I'd pay \$50 to see it." If Miramax can find 40,000 more like you, Steven, it'll be in the black.

» **REMEMBER MEMENTO** Hey, Academy members! M. Night Shyamalan has something to say: Forget Chris Nolan's *Memento* come voting time and he's gonna have issues. "*Memento* was the only [film] that broke ground this year. I came out and felt like my mind was rewired," says the director, currently editing his Mel Gibson crop-circle thriller *Signs*. "Just because it doesn't have a gigantic studio behind it and came out early in the year, well, it would be shameful if it wasn't considered one of the five best movies of the year." Tattoo that on your arm.

GOING IN CIRCLES Gibson reads Shyamalan's *Signs*



# Happiness

Italian filmmaker Nanni Moretti explores loss in *The Son's Room*

IT TAKES SKILL THESE DAYS, IF NOT nerve, to put a vital, happy nuclear family on screen and to invite us to share in every quiet tremor, every gentle jostle and smile of their steady, deep-flowing contentment. *The Son's Room* was directed and cowritten by the Italian filmmaker and actor Nanni Moretti (*Caro Diario*), who has given himself the role of an affectionate father and urbane professional shrink who presides over a wife and two teenage children, enveloping them in the same deceptively passive concern with which he counsels his psychiatric patients. He supports, and heals, less by what he says than by what he doesn't say.

Moretti, whose eyes glitter with knowledge from within a bland, bearded, professorial face, is the rare common-man artist who's wise enough to recognize that there are few things in this world more complex—and, as it turns out, more fragile—than happiness. A tragedy occurs, as tragedy sometimes will, and without giving what happens away, I'd be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the film's remarkable similarity, and also its remarkable contrast, to *In the Bedroom*. In *The Son's Room*, loss gives rise to sorrow, rage, tenderness, and the inexplicable feeling that hope is no longer possible. Except that there is no catharsis here, only a heartfelt exploration of the means by which happiness repairs itself. **A-** —OG

## The Son's Room

STARRING  
Nanni Moretti  
Laura Morante  
MIRAMAX  
RATED R  
99 MINUTES



FAMILY ROOM Laura Morante, Moretti, and the kids



PARTY GIRL Chaplin and Kidman celebrate

# Bride Price

Nicole Kidman arrives from Russia with love in *Birthday Girl*

AS NADIA, *Birthday Girl*'s Russian chick and mail-order bride shipped to the suburbs of London for a timorous English bank clerk, Nicole Kidman lustily embraces the smeared-mascara side of her talents—the gritty-girl ferocity that's winning the porcelain-cool actress such an ap-

## Birthday Girl

STARRING  
Nicole Kidman  
Ben Chaplin  
MIRAMAX  
RATED R  
93 MINUTES



CRYING SHAME A Domestic counselor listens

# Shelter Life

*Domestic Violence* is an involving, unblinking look at abused women

FREDERICK WISEMAN COMPLETED HIS first documentary, the controversial *Titicut Follies*, in 1967, and he has never altered his style since. The stationary camera, the lengthy unedited takes, the unblinking mood of "nonjudgmental" voyeurism—he's the Zen purist of cinema verité. So austere is his technique that *Domestic Violence*, like all his recent work, is getting only a modest theatrical release. Shooting at a shelter for battered women in Tampa Bay, Fla., Wiseman reveals the victims of domestic abuse in all of their pity and terror. Desperate, mostly uneducated, isolated from the middle-class loop of self-help, the women describe intricate and, as they admit, symbiotic patterns of cruelty set off by arguments over everything from sex to paying the bills to

## Domestic Violence

ZIPPORAH FILMS  
UNRATED  
106 MINUTES

stepping on the lawn. Gradually, we see that they've endured a kind of brainwashing.

There are moments when you want *Domestic Violence* to be shorter; less rambling and discursive. Yet Wiseman achieves something singular: When, after close to three hours of group therapy, he shows us a dispute between a woman and her tattoo-trash boyfriend, the sequence may look like an episode of *Cops*, but we watch it with a nearly novelistic sense of the fear, hostility, and sado-mental games that can tangle a relationship into a knot of unholy hell. **B+** —OG

precipitate fan club this season. And if British writer-director Jez Butterworth had let his sophomore picture get as dirty as Kidman's game recklessness invited—she started this before *Moulin Rouge* and *The Others*—he would have served up a tasty piece of cake.

But as it is, this slice is underspiced English vanilla. For all the zany business built into the story (including a bank robbery and teases of bondage sex), this is an effortfully decorated romantic caper in which Ben Chaplin, as the shy hero, mats his hair down with Loser Gel and stares inertly to convey his dilemma about whether to stay good or live it up bad. Meanwhile, somewhere on a European planet, audiences may be really excited to see leading French filmmaker and *Amélie* star Mathieu Kassovitz whooping it up

with fellow French star Vincent Cassel (*Brotherhood of the Wolf*) as Nadia's rogue cohorts. The two yak raucously in Russian and wave guns around, a couple of Gallic headliners as relatively invisible here as Steve Buscemi and Vince Vaughn might be in Paris.

**B-** —Lisa Schwarzbaum



SOLONDZ SURVIVOR Blair's writer calls on her craft in *Storytelling*

# Creative Whining

Director Todd Solondz takes audiences on yet another bleak tour of middle-class malaise in *Storytelling*

YOU A PERVERT?" A STUDENT reasonably asks the older stranger grinning at him while urinating in a high school lavatory in *Storytelling*. "No, actually I'm a documentary filmmaker," comes the punchline—and the aggressive, alienating punch of Todd Solondz's latest bulletin from the New Jersey school of existential nausea. That the teenager instinctively nails the link between directing and depravity is just one of the many acrid jokes in this two-part drama from the provocateur who made *Welcome to the Dollhouse* and *Happiness*.

As with those important late-1990s indies, Solondz creates a unique landscape of suburban-bred misery, hypocrisy, and vulnerability, a bleak vista that continually forces viewers to shift sympathies and antipathies.

Unlike his previous films, however, *Storytelling* is also defensive and ultimately vain in its self-regard: For the first time, the filmmaker reveals how much he cares what others think of him, daring a viewer to come up with any criticism he himself

can't put forth first. And this makes for a cleverness that undermines Solondz's otherwise fascinating worldview.

The movie comprises two unrelated tales with study points telegraphed by their titles, "Fiction" and "Non-Fiction." In the first, set at a mediocre college in the mid-1980s, a black Pulitzer

Prize-winning writer (Robert Wisdom) wields power over his white students by bluntness ("Do you think I have potential as a writer?" "No"), and over the women in his class, in particular, by his seductive, destructive sexual games. "Don't be racist," a student (Selma Blair) reminds herself in the story's most daring and disquieting scene, before bending over for her prof's sexual dominance (an act resentfully, showily covered by Solondz, who uses a big red rectangle to suit the MPAA's R requirements). Can this young student make

The litany includes indictments of bullying fathers (John Goodman), clueless mothers (Julie Hagerty), and insufferable siblings (Noah Fleiss, Jonathan Osser). There are stops to jeer at a phony display of gaudy upper-middle-class suburban Jewishness, and the casually horrible treatment by those same suburbanites of miserable live-in immigrant maids (personified—one hopes for the last time—by the wonderful Lupe Ontiveros).

But mostly Solondz luxuriates in the symbiotic carnivorousness of "truthful" moviemaking.

Paul Giamatti slides with creepy ease into the role of documentarian Toby Oxman; Mark Webber is poignant as Scooby Livingston, the directionless high schooler whose life

## Storytelling

STARRING  
Selma Blair  
Robert Wisdom  
FINE LINE  
RATED R  
87 MINUTES

Toby identifies with, mocks, and destroys. Solondz may be suggesting that the crap in a director's own life can't help but crapify his subjects—even if there's real crappiness in the suburbs. But he's also crapping on the idea expressed in the previous sentence. Cute. Now cut the crap. **B-** —LS

## CRITICAL MASS

Here's how a sampling of critics and movie audiences from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	EW READERS	JAMI BERNARD	MIKE CLARK	JOANNA CONNORS	ROGER EBERT	RITA KEMPLEY	LIAM LACEY	TODD MCCARTHY	CARRIE RICEY	RENE RODRIGUEZ	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	CRITICS' AVERAGE
A Beautiful Mind	A-	B-	A-	B-	A-	B	B	A-	B	B+	B+	B+
Black Hawk Down	A-	C+	A	A+	A	A	B+	B	B	-	B-	B+
The Count of Monte Cristo	A-	C+	B	B+	B	C	B-	-	B	-	B-	B-
I Am Sam	B	D	F	D	D	C+	B	D	C-	C+	C-	C-
Monster's Ball	A-	B-	A	B	A+	B+	B+	A-	B	C+	B-	B+
The Mothman Prophecies	B	-	B	C-	C-	B	C	A-	C	-	B+	C+
Orange County	B-	C	C	-	B	C	C+	C+	C+	B	B+	C+
Slackers	C	-	C-	D+	F	-	D	D+	C-	-	D+	D+
Snow Dogs	C+	D	D	-	-	C	D	D+	C	-	D	D+
A Walk to Remember	B+	D	D-	-	B	C-	-	D	B	-	D	C-

Critical Mass Movie Poll: Grade the movies yourself at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com) (AOL Keyword: EW)



# The Week

Reviews by OWEN GLEIBERMAN and LISA SCHWARZBAUM

## >> New Releases

**BIG FAT LIAR** ♦ (83 mins., Universal, PG) A sleaze-bucket Hollywood producer (Paul Giamatti) steals a short story written by Jason (Frankie Muniz), a 14-year-old compulsive liar, and uses it as the basis for his new film. That premise probably says more about the way that bad comedies get packaged these days than the creators of *Big Fat Liar* intended. To prove that he's an upright kid after all, Jason journeys to the West Coast and proceeds to humiliate the producer into owning up to his theft. He does this primarily by filling the scoundrel's swimming pool and shampoo tube with brightly colored ink, thus setting up the central "gag" of this noisy, frantic dud: Paul Giamatti, with blue skin and orange hair, racing around L.A. in the kind of bug-eyed apoleptic sputter that no actor has done half as well as Curly Howard. How appealing is Frankie Muniz, taking a break from *Malcolm in the Middle*, a day job he should by no means let go of? Let's call him the next-generation Fred Savage. **D**—OG

**WHAT TIME IS IT THERE?** ♦ (116 mins., Wellspring, unrated) Profound concepts of "time" and "there" are treated with playful intelligence in this marvelous work by Tsai Ming-Liang, a rare film that actually expands and deepens in the memory when its time on screen has run out. The director's muse, Lee Kang-Sheng, plays a solitary young street vendor in Taipei whose father has recently died, and who falls in love when he sells a watch to a solitary young woman (Chen Shiang-Chyi, Lee's costar in Tsai's *The River*) on her lonely way to Paris. She may no longer be in his time zone, but she is in his heart; the dead father may no longer be here on earth, but he remains, vividly, in the consciousness of his grieving widow. Tsai builds this shimmering story with deft, deadpan wit and a warm, understated love of the absurd, both in life and afterlife. **A**—LS

## >> In Theaters

**A BEAUTIFUL MIND** ♦ (135 mins., PG-13) As the brilliant mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr.,



BLUE MAN DUPE A to dye-for Giamatti gets what's coming to him in *Liar*

Russell Crowe summons a powerful depiction of mental illness with barely an eyelid flicker separating manifestations of sickness from utterly sane displays of creative concentration. **B+** (#633, Jan. 4)—LS

**BLACK HAWK DOWN** ♦ (143 mins., R) Ridley Scott's square-jawed combat saga about a 1993 U.S. military mission gone horribly wrong in Somalia might have been more moving if Scott hadn't bombed away the personality of every man fighting. **B-** (#635, Jan. 18)—LS

**THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO** (131 mins., PG-13) It's still fun to see a movie in which the villain is the guy in the puffiest shirt, but there's a lot of exposition to slog through before treachery enjoys the satisfying kick of justice. As Edmond Dantes, who escapes the prison of Chateau D'If and assumes the made-up identity of the Count of Monte Cristo, all to take revenge on the foppish traitor Fernand (Guy Pearce), Jim Caviezel doesn't exactly sing the screen. The best thing in the movie is Pearce's snot-nosed hauteur. **B-** (#638, Feb. 8)—OG



WINNERS OF THE WEEK

## Lutherans

Joseph Fiennes signs on to play Martin Luther in a German-produced biopic slated for 2003 release.

## LOSER OF THE WEEK

## 'Waking Up in Reno'

Miramax pulls the Billy Bob Thornton film from its scheduled Feb. 22 release, the latest addition to the company's famously deep shelves.

director-star Steve Oedekerk to suit the tastes of those who have never seen Woody Allen's *What's Up Tiger Lily?* Or turned on a television. **D** (#638, Feb. 8)—LS

**MONSTER'S BALL** ♦ (108 mins., R) This earnest, high-minded, and atmospheric drama about a Southern white prison guard who falls in love with the widow of a black inmate he helped put to death could set off smoke detectors for its fumes of preciousness. All roads may lead to award nominations for Billy Bob Thornton and Halle Berry—they act their pants off—but none lead to truth. **B-** (#636/#637, Jan. 25/Feb. 1)—LS

## THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

(119 mins., PG-13) A paranormal thriller directed by the talented Mark Pellington, who creates a mood of hushed apocalyptic creepiness that earns comparison to *Don't Look Now*. Richard Gere, as a *Washington Post* reporter, is led to Point Pleasant, W. Va., where the citizens have all seen...something. **B+** (#636/#637, Jan. 25/Feb. 1)—OG

**SLACKERS** ♦ (86 mins., R) Jason Schwartzman, flexing his beetle brows, plays a grotesque creep who blackmails a trio of exam cheaters into setting him up with the campus hottie. The movie uglifies Schwartzman's *Rushmore* persona, reducing him to the ultimate Uncool Anti-WASP. **D+** (#638, Feb. 8)—OG

**SNOW DOGS** ♦ (99 mins., PG) This alleged family comedy—*Black Men Can't Mush*—is about as distressed as a comedy can be without qualifying as a snow emergency. Cuba Gooding Jr. makes exaggerated yikes! faces. **D** (#636/#637, Jan. 25/Feb. 1)—LS

**A WALK TO REMEMBER** ♦ (99 mins., PG) A sugar-frosted soba-thon for preteen girls about a devoutly Christian-lite girl (Mandy Moore) who reforms the wild ways of a popular boy (Shane West), who falls in love with her, which is his tough luck, because she's got a tears-for-a-teen-angel secret. When television offers this audience a selection of nonconformist models no less virtuous, why settle for this spiritual junk food? **D** (#638, Feb. 8)—LS

More reviews at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com)  
(AOL Keyword: EW)

## BOX OFFICE

## 'SNOW' BANK

**F**AST STARTS ASIDE, THE box office race is a marathon, not a sprint, and for the third straight week, *Black Hawk Down* and *Snow Dogs* finished Nos. 1 and 2, creating a pair of purty nest eggs. For more evidence that opening weekend isn't everything, *A Beautiful Mind* remained in the top 5, cracking the \$100 million mark, while *Gosford Park* and *In the Bedroom* maintained healthy per-screen averages well into their releases. A trio of films (*A Walk to Remember*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *The Mothman Prophecies*) avoided the sophomore slump, while a pair of freshmen (*Slackers* and *Birthday Girl*) got bullied out of the top 10.



'SNOW DOGS'

## TOP 20

		WEEKEND GROSS*	NO. OF SITES*	WEEKEND PER-SITE AVERAGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE
1	BLACK HAWK DOWN Columbia	\$11.1	3,143	\$3,536	6	\$75.1
2	SNOW DOGS Disney	\$10.2	2,454	\$4,156	3	\$31.1
3	A WALK TO REMEMBER Warner Bros.	\$8.8	2,420	\$3,651	2	\$23.3
4	THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO Touchstone	\$8.8	2,211	\$3,968	2	\$23.4
5	A BEAUTIFUL MIND Universal	\$8.4	2,250	\$3,735	7	\$104.5
6	THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES Screen Gems	\$7.4	2,331	\$3,159	2	\$21.2
7	I AM SAM New Line	\$6.3	1,303	\$4,837	6	\$17.3
8	THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING New Line	\$5.7	2,309	\$2,470	7	\$266.3
9	KUNG POW! ENTER THE FIST 20th Century Fox	\$3.9	2,475	\$1,556	2	\$12.1
10	ORANGE COUNTY Paramount	\$2.9	2,225	\$1,292	4	\$37.8
11	SLACKERS Screen Gems	\$2.8	1,893	\$1,471	1	\$2.8
12	BIRTHDAY GIRL Miramax	\$2.4	1,000	\$2,371	1	\$2.4
13	GOSFORD PARK USA Films	\$2.4	800	\$2,953	6	\$19.3
14	THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS Touchstone	\$2.3	978	\$2,353	8	\$44.8
15	OCEAN'S ELEVEN Warner Bros.	\$2.1	1,541	\$1,335	9	\$178.9
16	BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF Universal	\$1.9	393	\$4,845	4	\$6.8
17	IN THE BEDROOM Miramax	\$1.8	549	\$3,329	11	\$17.0
18	JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS Paramount	\$1.2	1,424	\$847	7	\$77.7
19	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: SPECIAL EDITION Disney	\$1.2	68	\$17,086	5	\$14.1
20	HARRY POTTER... Warner Bros.	\$1.0	907	\$1,114	12	\$312.9

SOURCE: ACNIELSEN EDI, INC. WEEKEND OF FEB. 1-3 \*WEEKEND GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS  
†INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SCREENS

## TRACK RECORD: NICOLE KIDMAN

		NO. OF SITES	DOMESTIC GROSS	OPENING WEEKEND
8/10/01	THE OTHERS Dimension	1,678	\$96.4	\$14.1
5/18/01	MOULIN ROUGE 20th Century Fox	2,279	\$57.1	\$13.7
7/16/99	EYES WIDE SHUT Warner Bros.	2,411	\$55.6	\$21.7
10/16/98	PRACTICAL MAGIC Warner Bros.	2,852	\$46.6	\$13.1
9/26/97	THE PEACEMAKER DreamWorks	2,362	\$41.1	\$12.3
12/24/96	THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY Gramercy	7	\$3.7	\$0.1
9/27/95	TO DIE FOR Columbia	11	\$21.3	\$0.4
6/16/95	BATMAN FOREVER Warner Bros.	2,842	\$184.0	\$52.8
11/12/93	MY LIFE Columbia	800	\$27.8	\$5.5
10/1/93	MALICE Columbia	1,431	\$46.4	\$9.2

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC. \*STILL TRACKING

## LEGACY Harold Russell: 1914-2002

# A VERY SPECIAL OSCAR

**M**Y LIFE IS A SERIES OF THINGS that just happen," Harold Russell once shrugged to a reporter. The WWII veteran, actor, and advocate for the disabled died of a heart attack on Jan. 29, at 88, in a Massachusetts nursing home. Here's what "just happened" in his life:

Born in 1914, he enlisted in the Army the day after Pearl Harbor. On D-Day, he "got into an argument with a block of TNT and lost." His mangled hands were replaced with metal hooks, with which Russell became adept enough to be spotlighted in an Army documentary. This was seen by director William Wyler, who cast him as disabled soldier Homer Par-

rish in the 1946 returning-veterans hit *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

Russell was nominated for best supporting actor but was up against established actors like Claude Rains, so the



Academy gave him a special Oscar as consolation. But Russell won the acting award, too, thus becoming the only performer ever to win two Oscars for the same role. He went back to college on Wyler's advice, devoted his life to organizations for the disabled, and appeared in only two more movies, 1980's *Inside Moves* and 1997's *Dogtown*. When a reporter questioned the 34-year delay between *Best* and *Inside*, Russell deadpanned, "Bad agent."

In 1992, he auctioned off his acting Oscar to help pay his wife's medical bills, a controversial act with which he was perfectly at peace. "If I ever get lonely for it," he said, "I can watch the picture." —Ty Burr



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# WhattoWatch

A comprehensive guide to the week's new and DVD-blockbusters, classic picks, genre flicks, and much more

VIDEO & DVD

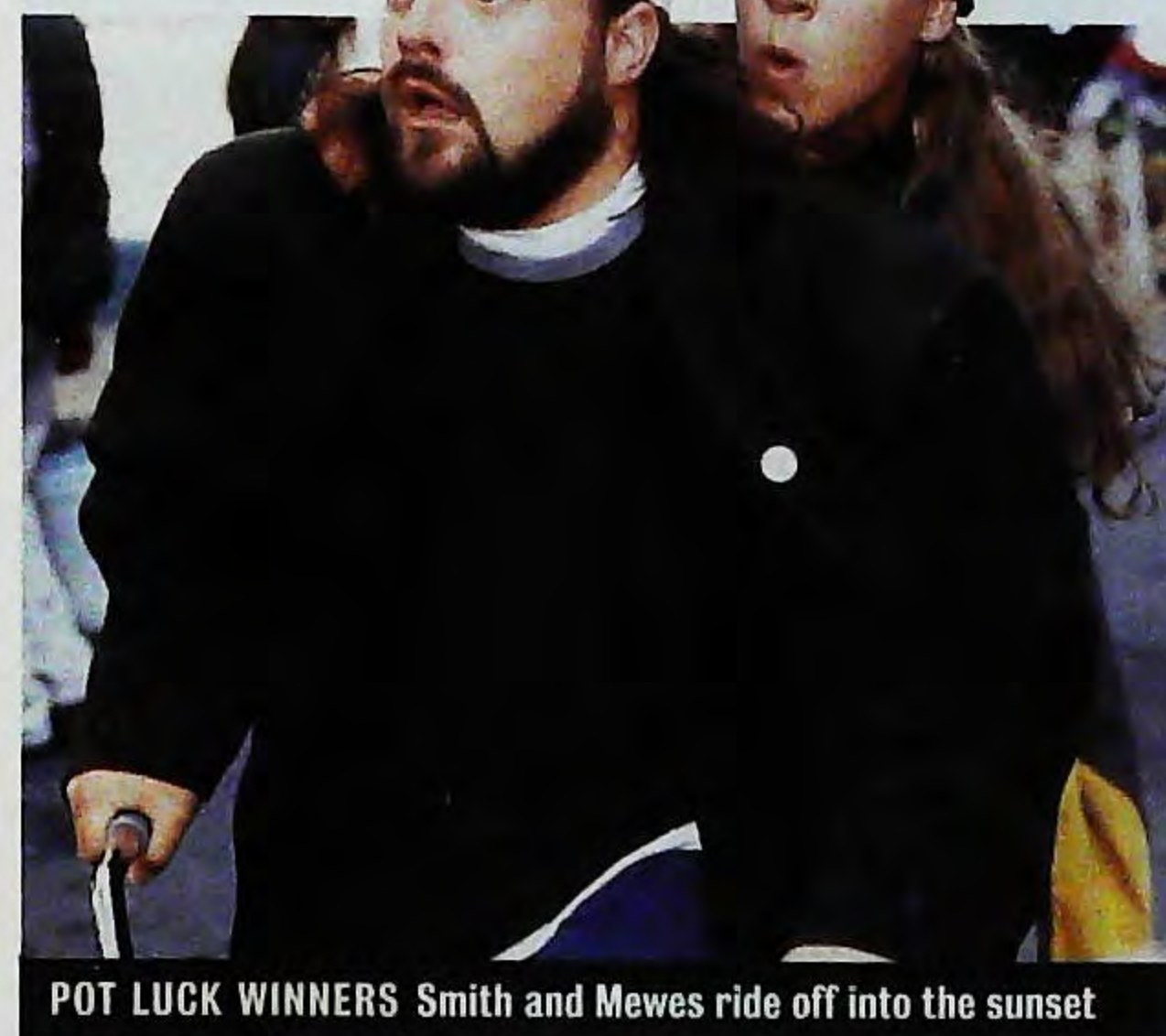
## NEW TO DVD

**WILD STRAWBERRIES** ♦ (1957, Criterion, 91 mins., unrated, \$39.95) At the age of 39, with *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *The Seventh Seal* under his belt, Ingmar Bergman stood at the center stage of world cinema—and he was miserable. His third marriage was on the rocks, he was juggling theatrical and film productions, and his nonrelationship with his stern pastor father anguished him to the point where he was hospitalized with an ulcer. There he conceived the script for the aching, wise *Wild Strawberries*, in which a self-absorbed old doctor (Victor Sjöström, himself a former director) quietly steps back into the slipstream of humanity while traveling to receive an honorary degree.

The opening nightmare sequence sprang straight from Bergman's own dreams, and as the film glances into the doctor's bucolic childhood, touches on the unhappiness of marriage, and marvels at the brutal honesties of youth, one realizes that the filmmaker is re-creating his

father—and thawing him out in the bargain. The DVD is a thin package by Criterion standards, with a brisk, knowledgeable alternate-track commentary by historian Peter Cowie. But why carp when you have a print that's as clear as a sense memory, and a film that goes where many others have gone (yes, this is *Scrooge* for Ph.D.s) but with a subtlety few have dreamed of? **A** —*Ty Burr*

**GROUNDHOG DAY: SPECIAL EDITION** ♦ (1993, Columbia TriStar, 101 mins., PG, \$24.95) Don't let the fact that Bill Murray is the star fool you. *Groundhog Day*—one man's journey through a multitude of identical yesterdays—is one of the most serious, sophisticated fantasy films you'll come across. The bonuses are a little slim (a commentary from director Harold Ramis and a documentary), but they're kind of irrelevant here. You'll buy this movie for the movie—and for the fact that repeated DVD viewings won't wear it out. **B+** —*Marc Bernardin*



POT LUCK WINNERS Smith and Mewes ride off into the sunset

## Chronic Gains

Kevin Smith's raunchy *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* is a stoned-cold blast. **by Mike Flaherty**

**A**FTER GRANTING THE titular burnouts scene-stealing interludes in each of his previous films, it was only a matter of time before writer-director Kevin Smith gave them their own heavy-lidded feature romp. *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* catches up with the duo at their convenience-store hangout, when they learn that some Hollywood bigwig has optioned *Bluntman & Chronic*, a comic book starring ganja-puffing characters based on them (the comic first appeared in Smith's 1997 romantic comedy *Chasing Amy*). Fearing it will brand them as sell-outs—and determined to put the kibosh on the flick—they

thumb their way to Tinseltown.

In true road-movie tradition, the barely-there plot is clotheslined on a series of absurd encounters, which Smith crams with self-deprecating cameos. Among the most inspired are

*American Pie*'s Seann William Scott (as a sensitive animal rights activist), Chris Rock (as a scabrously racist director), and Ben Affleck and Matt Damon (playing themselves in a hilarious *Good Will Hunting* parody).

Running amok through it all is Jason Mewes' Jay, the tale's foulmouthed ringmaster with the mentality of a 15-year-old and the vocabulary of a mack daddy. He's also the flick's supreme pleasure. Smith has

**Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back**  
2001  
DIMENSION  
104 MINUTES  
RATED R  
ALSO ON DVD



'GROUNDHOG DAY'

pledged that *Jay and Silent Bob* would be their swan song, which would be a shame. Mewes' comic potential alone is cause to hope he won't bogart such a promising franchise. **B+**

**WHAT WE SAID THEN:** "[*Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* is] a hit-or-miss affair that starts out wobbly, then gathers comic momentum." (#612/613, Sept. 7, 2001) **B** —*Owen Gleiberman*

JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK: TRACY BENNETT; GROUNDHOG DAY: PHOTOFEST



What to Do About Excellent Movies About Evil People

# ENEMY MINDS

**T**HE BIRTH OF A NATION (1915, Image, 187 mins., unrated, \$29.99) was a crucial breakthrough in cinema history: the first to break out of the short-filmed-play box and stand on its own as a movie. It also glorifies the Ku Klux Klan and contains some of the most racist images imaginable of black people. TRIUMPH OF THE WILL: SPECIAL EDITION (1935, Synapse, 120 mins., unrated, \$34.98) is a brilliantly filmed ad campaign—and what it's selling is Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. Both films are on DVD. Why would you ever consider watching them?

Well, D.W. Griffith developed the language of film we still live with—the close-ups, the cutaways—and *Birth of a Nation* is the movie where he put it all together. The uproar when it was first released (the NAACP, among others, threatened a boycott) is also of import, although since the Image DVD lacks scholarly commentary, you won't get the full story. A filmed record of the 1934 Nazi Party Convention at Nuremberg, Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph* remains a chilling, visually



'TRIUMPH OF THE WILL'

mesmerizing example of the Wagnerian propaganda that got Hitler elected in the first place; as such it's useful in understanding modern-day despots like Milosevic and even bin Laden (the DVD does have a commentary track, and a dandy one). But the best reason to watch these two films today? Easy: Know thy enemy. —Ty Burr

## DRAMA

**HARDBALL** ♦ Keanu Reeves, Diane Lane (2001, Paramount, 106 mins., PG-13, also on DVD) There was no reason to expect much from a movie starring Reeves as a luckless gambler paying off his debts by reluctantly coaching a baseball team full of foulmouthed ghetto kids. After all, its basic formula was already getting tired before the *Bad News Bears* went to Japan. But with some inner-city grit and some flashes of genuine heart (and thankfully without an obligatory big-game finale), *Hardball* rises above, say, *The Mighty Ducks*. Reeves will never be as good as Walter Matthau was, but working with these urban moppets, he hits his stride. **B-** —Michael Sauter

**HEARTS IN ATLANTIS** ♦ Anthony Hopkins, Anton Yelchin (2001, Warner, 101 mins., PG-



'HEARTS IN ATLANTIS'

13, also on DVD) It's when Stephen King's tales wax sentimental that they're at their scariest. Sun-drenched nostalgia—*EEK!* A significance-laden baseball glove, first kiss, new bicycle—*brrrrr!* Hopkins, as a psychic wise man hunted by Cold War-era goons, is noble but wasted in a part that requires him to (*yikes!*) cozy up to his fatherless young neighbor (the puppylike Yelchin). One half-wishes he'd break out the fava beans and Chianti. **C+** —Alice King



'HARDBALL'

## ACTION

**VAMPIRE HUNTER D: BLOODLUST** ♦ Voices by Andrew Philpot, Dwight Schultz (2001, Urban Vision, 103 mins., R, also on DVD) A little bit Buffy, a generous helping of Blade, and a whole lot of Clint Eastwood, the hero of the 1985 cult anime hit *Vampire Hunter D* got the lavish theatrical feature treatment with *Bloodlust*. And it shows: The tale of a half-human/half-vampire bounty hunter's search for a vampnapped woman is rendered in a staggeringly fluid (and likely expensive) animation

style that puts the old flick to shame. As for the story itself, it does take some ponderous detours into metaphilosophy land, but by and large, it's a Western told with a refreshingly Western sensibility. **B+** —Marc Bernardin



'VAMPIRE HUNTER D: BLOODLUST'

## RICHARD GRIECO

**SEXUAL PREDATOR** ♦ Richard Grieco, Angie Everhart (2001, Columbia TriStar, 88 mins., R, also on DVD) Gone are the days when Angie Everhart was a high-fashion model and Richard Grieco was, well, famous for being on *Booker*. But don't feel too bad for them: The pair teamed up as costars and executive producers of this straight-to-video offering

that's about two steps shy of shoddy porn. She's the dowdy, bespectacled probation officer assigned to monitor him, a seedy sexual offender who's guilty of erotic asphyxiation. But it's not too long till she lets her auburn hair down and turns the over-synthesized music up. On second thought, maybe we *should* feel bad for them. **F** —Sunny Lee

## RESTLESS DIRECTOR OF THE WEEK

### Ridley Scott

The *Black Hawk Down* helmer plans to once again reedit *Blade Runner*, the 1982 Harrison Ford sci-fi thriller that has already been through a theatrical version and a director's cut. We can't say how it'll be different, other than that it'll probably be longer.



'PANDAEMONIUM'

## LITERARY

**PANDAEMONIUM** ♦ Linus Roache, John Hannah (2001, USA, 125 mins., PG-13, also on DVD) Poetic genius leads to opium addiction and dirty competition in director Julien Temple's electrified trip through the minds of the revolutionary English Romantics Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Roache) and William Wordsworth (Hannah). Temple, who brilliantly profiled the Sex Pistols in 2000's *The Filth and the Fury*, embellishes history, implying Wordsworth felt so intimidated by his wild-minded friend that he sabotaged the publication of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." But with luxurious production de-

sign and inventive camera work, Temple's ode to the era, its rock-starlike poets, and the processes behind Coleridge's masterworks (like "Rime of the Ancient Mariner") remains loyal to the art. **B+** —Erin Richter



'PANDAEMONIUM'

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**LAGAAN: ONCE UPON A TIME IN INDIA** ♦ Aamir Khan, Gracy Singh (2001, Columbia TriStar, 225 mins., unrated, subtitled, also on DVD) To avoid submitting to exorbitant taxes, a poor 19th-century Indian village must pull together and defeat its ruthless British rulers in, of all things, a cricket match. Set against the social commentary

is a love triangle involving a farmer (a nuanced Khan), a village pixie (Singh), and a Brit (Rachel Shelley). And it's a musical! *Lagaan* is an excellent way to sample the exotic lushness of Indian cinema—it is India's Oscar entry for 2001—and to avoid Bollywood's usual worn-out plots and overspiced acting. **A-** —Monica Mehta



'LAGAAN: ONCE UPON A TIME IN INDIA'

## THE CHARTS

### 'RACE' UNDER FIRE

**I**N SPITE OF SOME STIFF kiddie competition from Disney's underwater adventure *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (No. 2), the star-studded chase comedy *Rat Race*—a wacky descendant of 1963's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*—finished ahead of the pack and took the top prize. Replete with comedic greats like John Cleese, Rowan Atkinson, Whoopi Goldberg, and Jon Lovitz, *Rat Race* barely held its own against the children's-rental juggernaut that makes so many Disney films video champions. Meanwhile, after a nine-week shelf life on the chart, *Jurassic Park III* (No. 21) is finally extinct.



'RAT RACE'

## TAPE RENTALS

LAST WEEK		GROSS TO DATE	WEEKS ON CHART	EW VIDEO GRADE
1	RAT RACE John Cleese	\$56.6	1	B
2	ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE Animated	\$84.1	1	D
3	KISS OF THE DRAGON Jet Li	\$36.8	2	B-
4	THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS Vin Diesel	\$144.5	5	C-
5	THE GLASS HOUSE Leelee Sobieski	\$18.1	5	C
6	AMERICAN PIE 2 (RATED) Jason Biggs	\$145.1	3	A-
7	JEEPERS CREEPERS Justin Long	\$57.9	4	B
8	ROCK STAR Mark Wahlberg	\$17.0	2	C
9	MOULIN ROUGE Nicole Kidman	\$57.0	7	A-
10	WHAT'S THE WORST THAT...? Martin Lawrence	\$32.3	5	C-
11	THE SCORE Robert De Niro	\$71.1	8	B+
12	THE PRINCESS DIARIES Anne Hathaway	\$108.2	7	B+
13	LEGALLY BLONDE Reese Witherspoon	\$95.7	13	C+
14	RUSH HOUR 2 Jackie Chan	\$226.1	8	B-
15	AMERICAN PIE 2 (UNRATED) Jason Biggs	\$145.1	3	A-
16	EVOLUTION David Duchovny	\$38.3	6	C-
17	PEARL HARBOR Ben Affleck	\$198.5	9	B
18	AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS Julia Roberts	\$93.6	12	C
19	SCARY MOVIE 2 Anna Faris	\$71.3	7	D+
20	SWORDFISH John Travolta	\$69.8	14	D+

SOURCE: VIDEO BUSINESS; VIDIOTRAC FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEB. 3, 2002. BOX OFFICE GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS. SOURCE: ADRIELSEN EDI, INC., AND EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC.

## EW RECOMMENDS

**THE ANNIVERSARY PARTY** Alan Cumming (*New Line, R*) A voyeuristic glimpse at the Hollywood types who live in glass houses and sling stones. **B+**

**GHOST WORLD** Thora Birch (*MGM, R*) Two high schoolers take an exquisite tour of the twilight zone between high school and the real world. **A-**

**THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR** Franke Potente (*Columbia TriStar, R*) Run Lola Run's director shows that life is about intersecting fates. **B+**

## COMING UP

**BOJANGLES** (*Showtime, unrated*) Gregory Hines hoofs it through a made-for-TV portrait of groundbreaking tap dancer/movie star Bill Robinson.

**CLOSE-UP** (*Facets, unrated*) An Iranian man falls from greatness when he meets his idol in this fact-based foreign language drama.

**DON'T SAY A WORD** (*Fox, R*) Michael Douglas needs to pry a six-digit code out of Brittany Murphy to save his daughter's life but she'll...never...teh-hell.

**THE MUSKETEER** (*Universal, PG-13*) Tim Roth and Justin Chambers prove that even 17th-century swashbuckling soldiers know kung fu.

**O** (*Lions Gate, R*) Julia Stiles, Mekhi Phifer, and Josh Hartnett star in a modern retread of William Shakespeare's *Othello*, teen-steam style.





**The Chair**  
8 PM  
TUESDAYS  
ABC

**Once and Again**  
10 PM  
MONDAYS  
ABC

that correct answers be provided to banal questions like "Don King or Larry King has been married seven times?"

*The Chamber* shed millions of viewers with each of its three airings and has been pulled. *The Chair*, also facing fluttering ratings, ties its contestants into what appears to be a souped-up Barcalounger. It's hosted by the great tennis player/hothead John McEnroe, who has managed to find the only job that might elicit sympathy for him. One's heart cannot help but go out to a once-dominating athlete reading cue-card lines like "You may love tennis, but you've just been aced by [short pause for pathetic dramatic effect]...the Chair!"

McEnroe presides over his show's salient gimmick: Contestants must keep their heart rates below a predetermined "redline" level before they're allowed to respond to quizzing. Thus *The Chair* offers the static, tedious spectacle of a bound-but-not-gagged nervous Nellie sitting in a chair, waiting for his or her heart rate to lower so that he or she can answer a question such as "*The Practice*, *Ally McBeal*, *The Sopranos*, and *Boston Public*—which of these TV shows is not set in Boston?"

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It's disgraceful that tripe like *The Chair* should have found a berth on ABC while the Emmy-winning *Once and Again* was preempted by an episode of *The Chair* on Jan. 18 and has since left the air for seven weeks, replaced for the moment by such tripe as *The Best Commercials You've Never Seen* (And Some You Have). It's clear that *Once and Again*'s future is in doubt as well. I know, I know—O&A is also a low-rated series, and broadcast

## Game Over?

Losing steam with game shows like *The Chair*, ABC should reconsider *Once and Again* as more than just a consolation prize. by Ken Tucker

**B**OY, IT WAS GREAT WHILE it lasted, wasn't it? • I'm talking, of course, about the torture-game-show

trend, in which Fox's *The Chamber* and ABC's *The Chair* competed for our hummingbird attention spans by subjecting

squirming, strapped-down contestants to licking flames, blasts of freezing air, and flashing lights, all the while demanding

networks need to schedule shows that appeal to the widest possible audience, and we all have an appetite for junk-food TV (*7th Heaven* and Richard Dreyfuss' fascinatingly botched, increasingly *Touched by an Angel*-ed *The Education of Max Bickford* are among my sugary viewing desserts).

But while *The Chair* and *The Chamber* are barely worth watching more than once, *Once and Again* is worth viewing again and again. This subtle family drama has recently risen to greater heights of emotional richness. In addition to the carefully calibrated acting of leads Sela Ward and Billy Campbell, the series offers the most vivid,

complex depiction of adolescence among current TV dramas, and in its last few episodes has done much to flesh out the motives and desires of its supporting adult characters, particularly Susanna Thompson, who is having a magnificent run as the clenched, depressed ex-wife of Campbell's Rick.

The departure of O&A and the arrival of *The Chair* coincided with the ascension of Susan Lyne as ABC Entertainment president. Lyne promises that O&A will return—starting March 4, on Mondays at 10 p.m., "where it had its greatest success." Lyne secured her job by overseeing some terrific ABC TV movies, most notably last

year's boffo Judy Davis-starring Judy Garland biopic, which speaks well for her taste. But she's now heading up an entertainment division that thinks the way to please the masses is to kitsch them to death: not just *The Chair*, but also the exhausted *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and the multiply scheduled *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, plus those damn blooper packages. I wish I believed that Lyne will champion *Once and Again* as one of ABC's few prestige shows, one whose ratings might even be given a boost if the network were to, say, promote it! I mean, jeez, let's be crass here: Are there more attractive stars around (for adult viewers) than

Ward and Campbell, or cuter ones (for teen watchers) than the series' kids, such as Shane West and Evan Rachel Wood?

Two postscripts: For the record, had it lasted, *The Chamber* would've received a generous D+, mostly on the strength of its gleaming titular game piece, which looked like an MRI machine designed by Dr. Evil.

And had ABC and the *Once and Again* producers seen fit to release a few of its in-the-can episodes of O&A to me, I could have been more specific in extolling its upcoming charms. Sometimes it ain't just the torturous ratings: Shows can tie their own hands, too. *The Chair*: D *Once and Again*: A

EW Presents Its Scorecard for the Super Bowl Commercial Blitz

## SPOT COVERAGE

**F**OR ONCE, THE GAME WAS MORE exciting than the ads. But that doesn't mean I'm not up for a little Monday-morning commercial quarterbacking anyway. And while it pains me to exclude my favorite ad—the great, fantastic, so-cool-looking preview for *Spider-Man*—because it ran during the supersize *Malcolm in the Middle*, I'll abide by the rules. The following pitches qualify for EW's annual Super Bowl spot-check. —KT

- **BEST USE OF STAR POWER** Kevin Bacon doing a six-degrees-of-Kevin-Bacon to prove his identity for Visa's check card was wittily cute, as opposed to Danny DeVito as a Lipton Brisk Iced-tea-swilling puppet, or James Woods and Jim Belushi shilling for Blockbuster as the voices of a booty-shaking rabbit and guinea pig. They were just creepy-cute.

- **BEST MULTIPLE PERSONALITY** Presented by Pepsi in rapid succession with a Lesley Gore-ish Britney, a Diana Ross-y Britney, a Gidget-y Britney, a hippie Britney, a Robert Palmer-ed Britney, and a



AD FADS (1) Bacon for Visa, (2) Blockbuster's furry friends, (3) Britney for Pepsi, (4) the truth.com rat

2002 Britney, I deem her Supremes-era incarnation the grooviest. Miss Spears always displays her greatest urgency and energy when she strives to be a soul diva.

- **BEST MOVIE HYPE** Sorry, Austin Powers, Blade, and you Men in Black—the coolest spot boiled down to XXX's genially over-the-top tag line "Vin Diesel is...triple-X!"

- **BEST SEPT. 11 ACKNOWLEDGMENT** Monster.com's Rudy Giuliani spot was heartfelt, but when Budweiser trotted out its big old Clydesdales, who lumbered

across the country to stop and bow their heads before Manhattan, there were damp eyes in my house.

- **BEST USE OF SANDWICH MEAT** Quizno's Subs (anyone had one of these? hands?) showed a competitor blowing a tranquilizer dart into a wavering consumer's neck to tilt her into picking their sandwich. Black humor so on-target, I'd contemplate eating one of those carbo-monsters.

- **BEST SOCIAL-AGENDA PROPAGANDA** The Office of National Drug Control Policy's equation of recreational drug-ging with supporting terrorism was so discreetly specious, none of the kids at

our party (the ads' intended audience) could make the connection. But the guy dressed as a dying rat who equated the cyanide in cigarettes with that in rat poison, courtesy of the American Legacy Foundation's thetruth.com antismoking campaign? That was a clear message.

- **BEST TIME TO REFILL YOUR DRINK** Anytime during that slew of annoyingly vague commercials for AT&T Wireless' new website, mlife.com—some of the most tedious ads I've ever seen in mlife.







## What to Watch

## WEDNESDAY

February 13

8-9PM

**DAWSON'S CREEK** (The WB, TV-14-DLV) Joey is robbed at gunpoint, then the perp gets hit by a hit-and-run driver. Poetic justice or contrived sweeps drama? You decide.



ASSUME THE POSITION

8-9PM

**ENTERPRISE** (UPN, TV-PG) Trip and Reed lose contact with the ship while running a shuttlepod errand. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

9-10:30PM

**A HUEY P. NEWTON STORY** (PBS, TV-14-L) Spike Lee directs Roger Guenveur Smith's adaptation of his own play about the Black Panther founder.

9:30-10PM

**THE JOB** (ABC, TV-14-L) Talk about the pot calling the kettle black: Mike suspects long-suffering Toni is having an affair.

9-9:30PM

**THE DREW CAREY SHOW** (ABC, TV-PG-DLV) When a brassy flatfoot (Jenny McCarthy, above) gives up on good-looking guys to take up with a low-maintenance shlub, Drew thinks he's hit the dating lottery...till he realizes she's made him her proverbial bitch. Funny stuff, but, as with many *Carey* episodes, it comes up short. For one thing, there seems to be two glaringly flat jokes for every zinger (somebody wake up the script doctor). For another, since it's doubtful the bodacious McCarthy was hired strictly for her comedy chops, could we have seen her at least once without that bulky uniform? B-

## FRIDAY

February 15

8-8:30PM

**SABRINA, THE TEENAGE WITCH** (The WB, TV-G) It's shades of the Ladies Man when R&B crooner Usher guests as a "love doctor" who helps Sabrina declare her love for Josh.

8-9PM

**HISTORY VS. HOLLYWOOD** (The History Channel, TV-G) Narrator Burt Reynolds judges the historical verisimilitude of the 1943 film *Guadalcanal Diary*. You go, Sharky!

8:30-9PM

**RAISING DAD** (The WB, TV-PG-D) The always-entertaining Samm Levine (*Freaks and Geeks*) stars as Sarah's math tutor. All that and Hesh (Jerry Adler) too!

9-10PM

**INSIDE TV LAND** (TV Land, TV-G) James Earl Jones, Steven Bochco, Cicely Tyson, and LeVar

Burton help relate the struggles and triumphs of "African Americans in Television Drama."

9-10PM

**THE CHRONICLE** (Sci Fi Channel, TV-PG-L) Maytag man, count your blessings: A hapless repairman disappears into an oven that's a portal to a parallel dimension.

9-9:30 PM

**REBA** (The WB, TV-PG-D) Tom Hanks' old Bosom Buddy, Peter Scolari, guests as an old flame of Reba's who comes to town looking for a second chance.

10-11PM

**THE IN CROWD AND SOCIAL CRUELTY** (ABC) John "I know you are, but what am I?" Stossel deconstructs the not-so-invisible caste system among school-age kids, and where it leads them as adults.

## THURSDAY

February 14

8-9PM

**BE HEARD** (MTV) A worldwide forum of via-satellite audiences will tune in and toss questions at the evening's guest of honor, Secretary of State Colin Powell.

8-8:30PM

**FAMILY GUY** (Fox, TV-PG-D) Adam Carolla and Alex Trebek guest-voice in this special three-stories-in-one episode. Call it "Treehouse of Hilarity."

8-10PM

**WWF SMACKDOWN!** (UPN, TV-PG-DLV) Expect a hot time as Stone Cold, The Rock, and RVD prepare for Sunday's *No Way Out* pay per view—and the onslaught of the nWo.

9:30-11PM

**THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES** (HBO, TV-MA) Though a galaxy of distaff celebrities have taken a crack at Eve Ensler's groundbreaking production, the author will handle its small-screen debut all by herself.



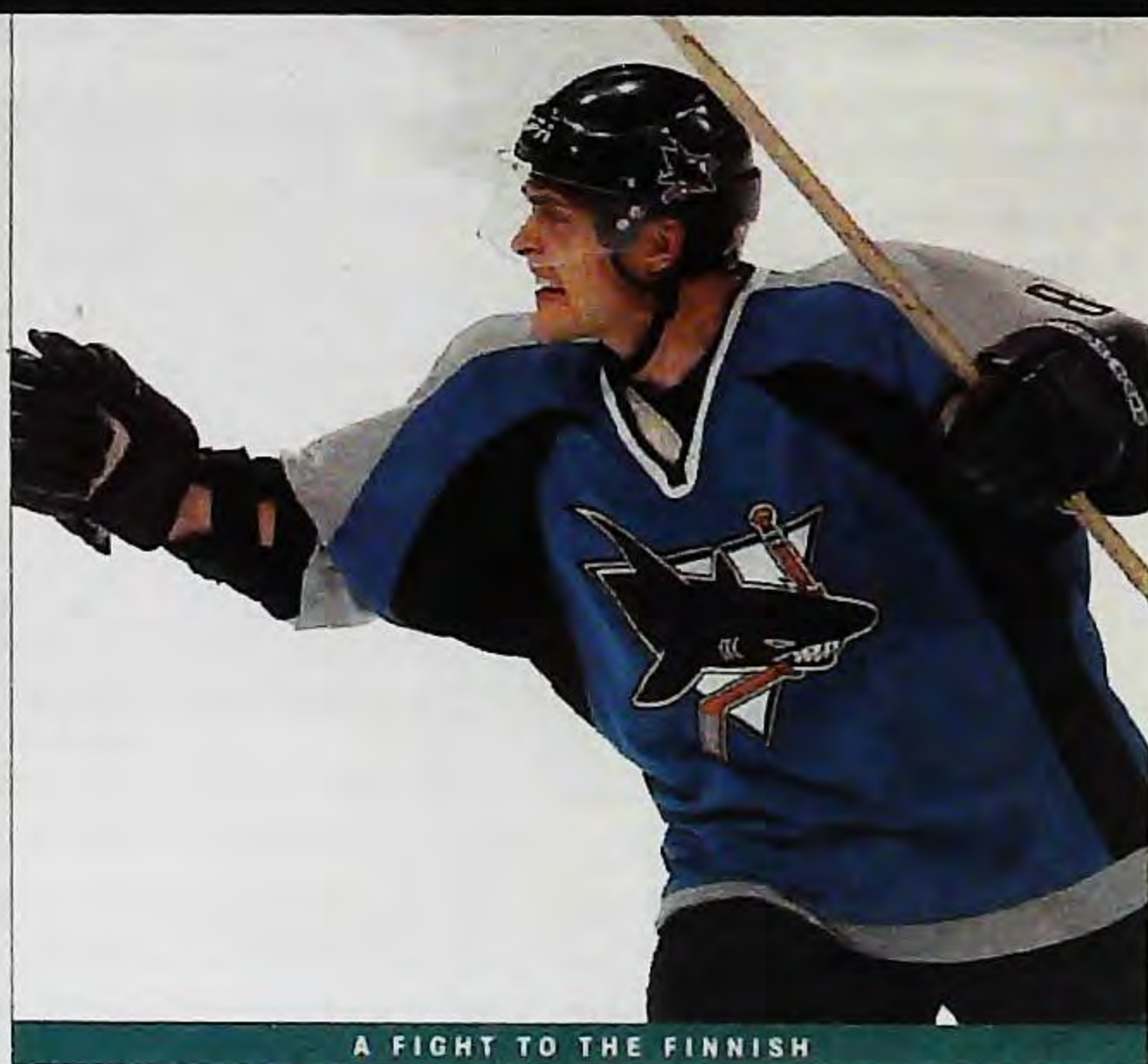
WELCOME BACK

8-8:30PM

**A CHARLIE BROWN VALENTINE** (ABC, TV-G) It's his first new special since 1994, but nothing's changed for Charlie. He's still borderline-obsessed with the Little Red-Haired Girl, and V-Day only exacerbates his alienation ("Can you cure loneliness?" he asks psychiatrist Lucy). Taken from the late Charles Schulz's strips, *Valentine* lacks nostalgic appeal but delivers plenty of quiet charm. B —Kristen Baldwin

9-10PM

**CHARMED** (The WB, TV-PG-LV) Phoebe's indecision about her upcoming nuptials to Cole conjures two combatting alter egos to help her make up her mind.



A FIGHT TO THE FINNISH

10:30-11:30PM; 12:05-1:35AM

**ICE HOCKEY: U.S. VS. FINLAND** (NBC) The U.S. team faces off for the first time on home ice since the 1980 Lake Placid games against a Finnish squad featuring San Jose Shark Teemu Selanne (above). NBC will commence coverage, then air its wee-hours conclusion after a news break.

## SATURDAY

Feb. 16



SHAQ ATTACK

8:30-9AM

**STATIC SHOCK** (Kids' WB!, TV-Y7-FV) Shaquille O'Neal guest-stars on the superhero-in-the-hood cartoon, befriending the titular caped crusader and helping him in a scuffle with some particularly nasty "meta-humans." Eventually, the two find they have more in common than they thought when Static reveals his dual personality to the NBA superstar. The series pulls off a neat trick with gorgeously escapist animation and gritty environs that keep things refreshingly real. B+

1-4PM

**MTV'S MARDI GRAS 2002** (MTV) Hosts Carson Daly and Britney Spears wax festive amid a sea of beer, beads, and boobies, while No Doubt, Mystikal, and OutKast keep the tunes coming straight from the Big Easy.

5-6PM

**RETURN TO HARLEM** (HGTV, TV-G) The Harlem Renaissance, that is, as the domesticity channel beholds the architecture and furnishings behind the early-20th-century art explosion.

8-11PM

**THUNDERBALL** (ABC, TV-14-DSV) Sean Connery goes head-to-head with an evil genius bent on (what else?) world destruction in the 1965 spy caper.

8-9:30PM

**AARON CARTER'S VALENTINE'S PARTY** (Pay per view, TV-G) Backstreet Boy Nick joins his kid brother for a few numbers when the prepubescent phenom takes the stage. Gummy bears not included.

10:05PM-MIDNIGHT

**LUMUMBA** (HBO, TV-MA) One of the darker tributes to Black History Month portrays the life and violent demise of the onetime leader of a newly Independent Congo.

## SUNDAY

February 17

7-10PM

**RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (ABC, TV-PG-LV) Hey, have you seen this flick? It's not bad. (R)

SERIES FINALE

7:30-8PM

**THE STEVE HARVEY SHOW** (The WB, TV-PG-D) Before they shut out the lights and close the door, we finally find out if Regina and Steve are meant to be.

7-7:30PM

**FUTURAMA** (Fox, TV-PG) With football now out of the way, East Coast viewers can finally get back on track, as Leela returns to the orphanarium and learns some secrets about her parents.

7:30-8PM

**ANATOMY OF A SCENE** (Sundance Channel, TV-14) The title says it all, as the series dissects an interlude from first-time director Bill Paxton's upcoming thriller, *Frailty*.

8-8:30PM

**THE SIMPSONS** (Fox, TV-PG-V) A little rich girl (Reese Witherspoon) moves to Springfield and promptly develops a crush on Bart.

9-11PM

**JANET JACKSON: IN CONCERT FROM HAWAII** (HBO, TV-14) Hey, it worked for Elvis. JJ rocks Honolulu live with tunes from her most recent offering, *All for You*.

8-9PM

**STRONG MEDICINE** (Lifetime, TV-14-L) Dr. Delgado's rape is the centerpiece of this episode, the first of three tales addressing violence against women. In other words, stay tuned for *The Division* and *Any Day Now*.

8-9PM

**DOC** (PAX, TV-G) Staff scribe Ernie Wallengren,

who was diagnosed six months ago with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (a.k.a. Lou Gehrig's disease), wrote this ep; Christian recording star Steven Curtis Chapman stars as a similarly afflicted musician.

8-9PM

**CMT CROSSROADS** (CMT, TV-PG) You might be a redneck if you're counting the days till this one-off collaboration between Hank Williams Jr. and Kid Rock.

9-11PM

**AMERICAN ICONS: STRUCTURES OF GLORY** (Travel Channel, TV-PG) And the patriotism just keeps on comin' as the special celebrates Yankee monuments like Mount Rushmore, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Empire State Building.

9-9:30PM

**THE LOOK FOR LESS** (Style, TV-PG) *Survivor* 2's Elisabeth Filarski goes slumming (if that's possible) with a look at ways to concoct a happening wardrobe on a tight budget.

9-10:30PM

**AMERICAN EXPERIENCE** (PBS, TV-PG) "Monkey Trial" returns to the landmark evolution-versus-creationism court battle that was the Scopes case.

11PM-MIDNIGHT

**OZ** (HBO, TV-MA) If Emerald City's "Man's Best Friend" program sounded a little too good to be true, well, it was, as one of the inmates' pooches are taught some, er, surprising tricks.



UN-FAITH-FULLY HERS

8-10PM

**KEEP THE FAITH, BABY** (Showtime, TV-14) Harry Lennix executes a star-making turn as legendary Harlem representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr. In this polished yet refreshingly candid biopic coproduced by the subject's son and grandson. Best known as Gloria Reuben's AIDS-researcher love interest on *ER*, Lennix oozes charisma, seducing constituents as well as three wives, including jazz pianist Hazel Scott, played by the luminous Vanessa Williams (above with Lennix). Director Doug McHenry stages compelling scenes of the power broker dealing with the likes of LBJ and RFK (or "Bobby Baby," as Powell casually calls him), while an envious Powell refers to MLK as "Martin Loser King." Keep an eye on Lennix; you'll see him again next year in the *Matrix* sequels. A- —Bruce Fretts





**The  
Summons**  
BY  
JOHN GRISHAM  
\$27.95  
DOUBLEDAY

# Trial and Errors

John Grisham's latest legal thriller is guilty of forgettable characters and a lackluster plot. **by Benjamin Svetkey**

**A** JOHN GRISHAM MYSTERY should read like a Rubik's Cube. Once you start turning pages

and twisting through its scrambled plotlines, you shouldn't be able to put it down.

*The Summons*, frankly, is

more like that puzzle where you try to get the BBs into the bear's eyes. It's not necessarily a bad book—indeed, in some

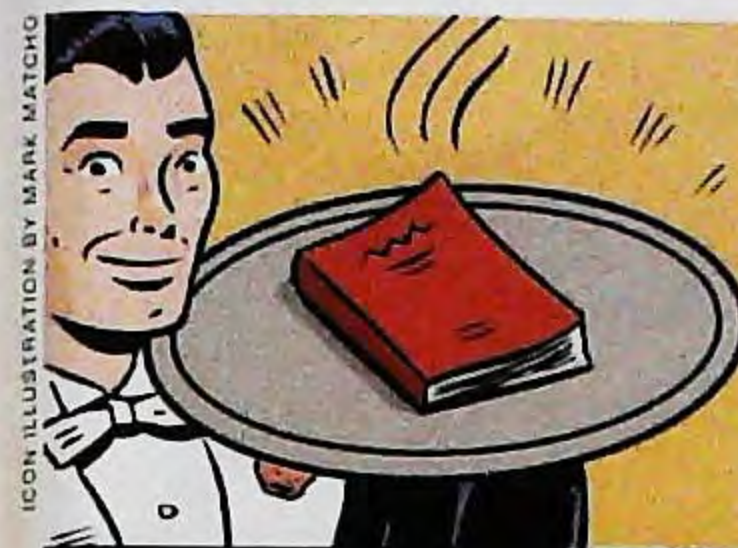
sports car? All will be revealed in the end. Actually, some of it can be figured out well before the end, which is one of the book's big problems, but never mind. The most important question in *The Summons* is one Grisham never gets around to answering: Why should readers care about any of the above?

Grisham tries to make his hero likable—why else would

ways Grisham has never been a better-behaved writer—but ultimately it's a mystery in which the most shocking surprise turns out to be how few shocking surprises are in it. It is, in short, not all that tough to put down.

The setup is certainly promising: Ray Atlee, a recently divorced 43-year-old University of Virginia law professor, receives a letter from his semi-estranged and dying father, a small-town judge with a reputation for being as incorruptible as he is cranky, summoning him to the ancestral ramshackle in Mississippi for a final talking-to. But when Ray arrives—a few hours ahead of his no-good drug-addicted younger brother, Forrest, who has also received a summons—he finds Dad dead on the sofa. He also finds \$3 million stuffed in the cabinets.

Where'd the money come from? How exactly did Judge Atlee die? Who are the thugs chasing Ray across the South after he bolts from his father's funeral with the cash stashed in the trunk of his



**NEW in Paperback**

**Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Movement**

Diane McWhorter (*Touchstone*, \$17, first published in 2001)

The *New York Times* contributor grills participants on both sides of the Birmingham civil rights struggle and plumbs her own childhood memories to produce a textured study of a troubled time and place.

**Bellow: A Biography** James Atlas (*Modern Library*, \$16.95, 2000) The Nobel novelist is the star of a heavyweight literary bio that spans a lifetime of big books and roller-coaster marriages.

**Eclipse** John Banville (*Vintage*, \$12, 2000) When an accomplished stage actor breaks down mid-performance, he finds no relief in revisiting his haunted boyhood home in a novel teeming with grief, ghosts, and elegant sentences.

he have Ray's gold-digging ex-wife leave him for a pudgy local millionaire known as the Liquidator?—but it's tough whipping up much sympathy. For one thing, Ray doesn't need or even want \$3 million; he makes more than enough teaching law to afford flying lessons and a nifty new Audi TT Roadster. And although it's sort of sweet the way he's still stuck on

his ex ("A half a billion dollars was looking good on her," he decides after spying her climbing out of the Liquidator's private jet at the airport), he isn't starved for affection. In fact, he brushes off advances from beautiful young law students because sleeping with them would be inappropriate. (Even the ones who are graduating in two weeks, the twerp.)

There aren't many other characters worth rooting for in *The Summons*—or even worth remembering—which is odd considering how much progress Grisham has made as a writer in other areas. His recent forays into literary novels—*A Painted House* and *Skippering Christmas*—have given his once hunt-and-peck prose a much more artful grace. "The red and yellow maples that once lined the street had died of some unknown disease," he writes, getting downright descriptive while visiting Judge Atlee's decaying Mississippi pile. "Four huge oaks shaded the front lawn. They shed leaves by the ton, far too many for anyone to rake and gather. And at least twice a year the oaks would lose a branch that would fall and crash somewhere onto the house, where it might or might not get removed." If he can write like that about a house, there's no reason he can't do better with people.

But, of course, Grisham's books aren't really supposed to be about people: They're supposed to be about turning pages, about hooking the reader with seemingly unsolvable riddles and then delivering delicious, didn't-see-it-coming solutions. They're supposed to be Rubik's Cubes.

What we've got here, unfortunately, is a cube with too few colors. **C**

## Between the Lines

The inside scoop on the book world

**>> RELAX, DON'T DO IT** Reports of his retirement have been greatly exaggerated: In a *Los Angeles Times* interview promoting his latest miniseries, *Rose Red*, Stephen King announced that he would soon be "done" with "writing books," adding that he didn't "want to finish up like Harold Robbins," who continued writing into his 80s. "This story gets recycled all the time and I put no more credence in it now than the last time," scoffs Susan Moldow, publisher of Scribner, which will release a King short-story collection, *Everything's Eventual*, next month and the novel *From a Buick 8* in the fall.

**>> BIG DEALS** Memoirist Maria Flook has signed with Broadway Books to write a book about the murder of Cape Cod fashion writer Christa Worthington. "[It will be] a work of literary nonfiction, not a category true-crime story," says Broadway executive editor Charlie Conrad, who thought Flook the ideal writer for the project since she lives in Worthington's hometown of Truro. "It'll use the murder to explore hidden truths about a place and its residents."... St. Martin's has signed a Sept. 11 book with a twist: *Inside 9-11: What Really Happened* comes from Germany's *Der Spiegel* news magazine: "They did a very vivid reconstruction, and they were also right there when the police first invaded the houses [in Hamburg] where Mohamed Atta and other terrorists had lived," says senior editor Tim Bent.

**>> ENGLISHMAN IN NEW YORK** The ever-busy Sting is planning to write his autobiography. But, as is often the case with celebrity book deals, publishers wishing to meet

with the rock star's representatives have had to talk seven-figure advances. Some have jumped, but not all. "Celebrity autobiography has such a high rate of failure and such a high rate of investment, you have to be careful about it," says the head of one house who decided not to offer. Sting's reps had no comment. —Matthew Flamm

**STING OPERATION** The star writes





# The Week

## >> Nonfiction

### JUNK ENGLISH ♦ Ken Smith

(Blast Books, \$12.95) "We made it. We can make it go away," says Smith, whose *Junk English* is a compendium of all that's bloated and blighted, redundant and ridiculous, in contemporary language. Using examples from various media, Smith explains why sloppy metaphors kill an idea ("the platforms on which the candidates ran were as calculated and artificial as plastic topiary"), strung-together nouns strangle a sentence ("focus group feedback analysis methodologies"), and the euphemisms of war are dishonest ("friendly fire=being shot at by your own troops"). Though he makes some negligible distinctions (is "remarkable" really such a bad substitute for "interesting"?), Smith exposes, in plain En-

glish, "a world of humbug in which the more we read and hear, the less we know." **A-** —Margot Mifflin

### GREGORY PECK: A BIOGRAPHY

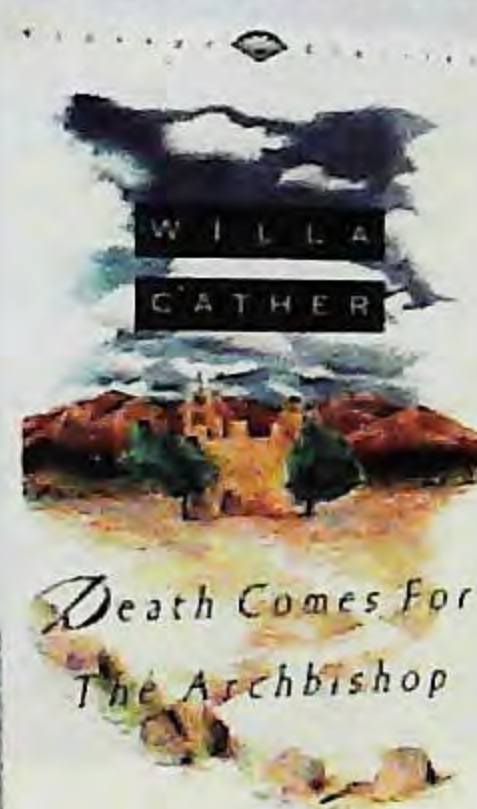
Gary Fishall (Scribner, \$28) Fitting its subject like a starched shirt, this journeyman bio is so even-keeled, dignified, and sedately efficient that Gregory Peck's cooperation is practically fingerprinted on every page. His near-impeccable first decade in pictures (*Gentleman's Agreement*), his mid-'50s disappointments (*Moby Dick*), and the subsequent crapshoot (lopsided double-bill suggestion: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Amazing Grace* and *Chuck*) are all recounted in an earnest patter that feels ready-made for the Robert Osborne intros on TCM ("He was bankable again!"). The result is likable but discouragingly innocuous. **B-** —Gregory Kirschling

## THE BOOK YOU HAVE TO READ

**Paula Fox recommends *Shadows on the Rock and Death Comes for the Archbishop* by Willa Cather (Vintage; \$12, \$10)**

I've been reading novels by Willa Cather this last year. I especially love *Shadows on the Rock* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. At first I didn't like either of them. That was years ago. I admired them but found I couldn't be fond. Now I'm wild about them both. [She] never wrote anything she didn't believe was truth, or as close to it as we humans can get. [My] experience with Cather is not dissimilar from my Faulkner experience. A friend who taught seniors in a private high school asked me to read Faulkner's *Light in August*. I made a face thinking of those yards of sentences I'd have to labor over. Then I began to read it, fell for it, never stopped talking about it, and wrote an entry in an encyclopedia about William Faulkner for which I received \$75. I noticed that a piece about Madonna, in the same encyclopedia, was worth \$250.

Paula Fox is author of the novel *Desperate Characters* and the memoir *Borrowed Finery*.



ONE PECK OF A GUY A new biography examines the actor's long career

### THE LAST OPIUM DEN ♦ Nick Tosches

(Bloomsbury, \$12.95) Crammed into this tiny 74-page tome is everything you ever wanted to know about opium—its history, politics, chemistry—except for one detail: what it's like to actually smoke it. For Tosches' sake, one hopes the experience was as mind-blowing as he hints, because he certainly logged enough frequent-flier miles searching for the stuff. Fortunately, his long quest for the elusive drug—which took him from New York to Hong Kong to Bangkok to Cambodia (where he finally scores)—makes for a delightfully readable travelogue. In fact, Tosches' playfully rococo prose packs a buzz all its own. **B+** —BS

### BEFORE & AFTER: STORIES FROM NEW YORK ♦ Edited by Thomas Beller

(Mr. Beller's Neighborhood Books, \$13) In his introduction, Beller explains that the original version of this collection of essays—a "greatest hits" from his hipster-lit website—was "almost finished on September 10." After Sept. 11, he chose to rework it so that half of the book is devoted to sketches of life in "normal" New York and half to the sort of first-person reports that erupted in magazines in the weeks following the attacks. The same introduction makes it clear that the editor doesn't know the difference between the words *weather* and *whether*, which is to say that this is a mixed grab bag. Aces such as Luc Sante (writing on the 1988 riot in Tompkins Square Park) and Phillip Lopate (doing a sharp appreciation of the Twin Towers) deliver

the goods; a score of lesser lights wallow in self-absorption and make evil look quite banal indeed. **C** —Troy Patterson

## >> Fiction

### ROSCOE ♦ William Kennedy

(Viking, \$24.95) In his seventh Albany-set novel, Kennedy combines Falstaff with Willie Stark of *All the King's Men* to create a truly memorable protagonist: Roscoe Conway, corpulent consigliere for the 1945 Democratic machine in the New York capital. In addition to a palpitating ticker, Roscoe is coping with an imminent mayoral election, a Republican-led inquiry into his party's various rackets, and the sudden, suspicious death of his old crony Elisha Fitzgibbon. Not to mention a lawsuit by his ex-wife against her sister, Elisha's widow and the unrequited love of Roscoe's life. A 1984 Pulitzer Prize winner for *Ironweed*, Kennedy is a natural storyteller whose zippy dialogue is worthy of Raymond Chandler. The fifth ace in this winning hand: rich local color, including cameos from historical figures like local gangster Jack "Legs" Diamond and presidential wannabe Al Smith. As Kennedy writes, "truth is in the details, even when you invent the details." Start to finish, *Roscoe* rings true. **A** —Thom Geier

### HARD FEELINGS ♦ Jason Starr

(Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, \$12) Richie Segal is the classic Everyman: stuck in a ho-hum marriage, trying to drink a little less, flailing at his sales job, and generally mud-



## Literary Wonder Boys

Producer Scott Rudin

is getting the ball rolling on Dave Eggers' and Jonathan Franzen's much-anticipated movie adaptations.

dling his way through middle-class life. A chance encounter with a childhood bully, though, turns Segal's life around—and not for the better—in Starr's workaday thriller; a throwback to the spare, snappy crime writing of Jim Thompson and James M. Cain. Starr is not at the level of his heroes, but *Feelings* is a noble effort to revive the hard-boiled theme of an ordinary life gone terribly wrong. **B** —Lisa Levy

### THE ZYGOTE CHRONICLES

Suzanne Finnamore (Grove, \$22) Finnamore, the engaging author of *Otherwise Engaged*, describes the highs, lows, and expanding middles of pregnancy in her follow-up novel. Her heroine eats, bloats, makes peace with her father, and falls in

love, real love, for the first time. Her story reads like a journal, a love letter to her womb, a goodbye to the guilt she's long harbored for the baby she aborted when she was 21 years old. An endeavor like this could alienate, or at least irritate, any reader who isn't also making the rounds at babyGap. But the author's voice, sly and sharp, hooks you: "It feels like the world's smallest kickboxer with cotton wrapped around his tiny feet and everything encased in flat champagne." Why her publisher is billing this as a novel rather than a memoir remains a marketing mystery. The high note of this sweet song of pregnancy is named Pablo Finnamore Friedman. **B** —Karen Valby

### A MULTITUDE OF SINS ♦ Richard Ford

(Knopf, \$25) Multitude? These 10 stories—by the author of *Independence Day* and *The Sports-writer*—are about just one, upper-middle-class lust: A journalist has a hotel-room tryst with the wife of a rich man; two real estate agents hit the hotel registration desk, then hit the sheets, "abandon[ing] themselves to the furious passions they'd been suppressing"; an accountant and a lobbyist check into—well, you get the idea. (Is the author subsidized by Hilton?) Ford often supplants characterization with fancy résumés and confuses stylized prose with overmannered description ("He could sense her heart beating stern, insistent beats"). Whenever he drops the self-seriousness—as he does in "Crèche," a snappy Christmas tale about a Hollywood lawyer and her Ohio family—he hits a winner, but the stories are generally like those hotel rooms: bland, anonymous, interchangeable. **B-** —TP

## BY OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR NEXT ONE: 100 GREAT FILMS, 100 GOOD FILMS, AND 100 FOR WHICH I SHOULD BE SHOT** by Mike Medavoy, with Josh Young (Pocket Books, \$27) As the documentary version of Robert Evans' *The Kid Stays in the Picture* schmoozes its way into theaters, you might want to balance your biz-history diet with this slightly more sober Hollywood memoir starring Medavoy, former production head of United Artists (where he oversaw *Annie Hall* and *Apocalypse Now*) and cofounder of Orion Pictures (*Dances With*

*Wolves*, *The Silence of the Lambs*). With help from EW contributor Young, the sexagenarian player looks back on 40-odd years in the motion picture racket, where producers can gamble on worthy projects like *The Great Santini*, then turn around and throw cash at *The Fiendish Plot of Dr. Fu Manchu*. The remembrances are all business—don't expect any casting-couch foolishness—but there's plenty of drama in Medavoy's missteps, including his dismissive treatment of a young filmmaker named Steven Spielberg. —Scott Brown

## BEST-SELLERS

## REEL READS

**W**ITH LITTLE TO NO MOVEMENT on the hardcover lists, we turned our attention to where the real action is. The paperback chart reads like the current movie section. *A Beautiful Mind*, with Russell Crowe's mug on the cover, reigns supreme at No. 1. And *Black Hawk Down* and *A Walk to Remember* climb to Nos. 2 and 3 on the mass-market list. But the real king of the chart is J.R.R. Tolkien. Sales of *The Lord of the Rings* (1.5 million copies in print after 12 pressruns) increased 20-fold in 2001. Five of his books are firmly entrenched in the top 10 lists.



## TRADE

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	<b>A BEAUTIFUL MIND</b> Sylvia Nasar, S&S/Touchstone, \$16	5
2	<b>FALL ON YOUR KNEES</b> Ann-Marie MacDonald, Scribner, \$14	1
3	<b>HEARTSONGS</b> Mattie J. T. Stepanek, VSP/Hyperion, \$11.95	7
4	<b>THE LORD OF THE RINGS</b> J.R.R. Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin, \$20	9
5	<b>A FINE BALANCE</b> Rohinton Mistry, Vintage, \$15	7
6	<b>THE LAST TIME THEY MET</b> Anita Shreve, Back Bay, \$13.95	1
7	<b>THE WRINKLE CURE</b> Nicholas Perricone, M.D., Warner, \$13.95	7
8	<b>THE FOUR AGREEMENTS</b> Don Miguel Ruiz, Amber-Allen, \$12.95	90
9	<b>RICH DAD, POOR DAD</b> Robert T. Kiyosaki with Sharon L. Lechter, Warner, \$15.95	83
10	<b>RICH DAD'S RETIRE YOUNG, RETIRE RICH</b> Robert T. Kiyosaki with Sharon L. Lechter, Warner, \$17.95	3

## MASS-MARKET

1	<b>A PAINTED HOUSE</b> John Grisham, Dell, \$7.99	5
2	<b>BLACK HAWK DOWN</b> Mark Bowden, Signet, \$7.99	15
3	<b>A WALK TO REMEMBER</b> Nicholas Sparks, Warner, \$6.99	15
4	<b>1ST TO DIE</b> James Patterson, Warner Vision, \$7.99	1
5	<b>THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING</b> J.R.R. Tolkien, Del Rey, \$6.99	14
6	<b>DR. ATKINS' NEW DIET REVOLUTION</b> Robert C. Atkins, M.D., Avon, \$7.99	214
7	<b>THE HOBBIT</b> J.R.R. Tolkien, Del Rey, \$6.99	28
8	<b>THE TWO TOWERS</b> J.R.R. Tolkien, Del Rey, \$6.99	9
9	<b>PENDRAGON</b> Catherine Coulter, Jove, \$7.99	3
10	<b>THE RETURN OF THE KING</b> J.R.R. Tolkien, Del Rey, \$6.99	7

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

## BIG-SCREEN BOUND

**GHOST SOLDIERS: THE FORGOTTEN EPIC STORY OF WORLD WAR II'S MOST DRAMATIC MISSION** Hampton Sides (*Doubleday*, \$24.95) C/W, Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner's company, will co-produce Sides' account of stealth Rangers. Cruise and Steven Spielberg are attached to star and direct, respectively.

**NAPPILY EVER AFTER** Trisha R. Thomas (*Three Rivers Press*, \$12) Universal and producer Marc Platt are adapting Thomas' tale of a beauty who dumps her commitment-shy boyfriend. Halle Berry is attached to play the looker.

**THE 25TH HOUR** David Benioff (*Plume*, \$13) Spike Lee will direct the adaptation of Benioff's novel about three New York City men who spend a final night partying before one goes to jail for drugs. Edward Norton will star in the film.



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# Kasey Jones

With her rootsy second CD, Aussie Kasey Chambers is poised to be the sweetheart of the nouveau-country rodeo. by David Browne

**A**FTER YEARS OF PLAYING second fiddle to mainstream Nashville, alt-country may finally

be having its day in the national sun. The Album of the Year Grammy nomination for the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

soundtrack—last year's equivalent to the Gregorian-chant fad of 1994—may be the most clear-cut illustration, but it's not

the only one. Choose an explanation: people's need for comfort after Sept. 11, or the desire for music with more gravity and less gloss than middle-of-the-road country delivers at the moment. Whatever the reason, who would have imagined a year ago that a cult figure like Ryan Adams would be selling respectably, appearing on *Saturday Night Live*, and up for his own Grammy? Or that Sony Legacy would be preparing an anthology on Uncle Tupelo, the long-defunct, indie-label cult band that begat Wilco and Son Volt?

As the latter demonstrates, alt-country now has its own alternative history, its own legends and standard-bearers, its own mythic albums. (Steve Earle's 1986 *Guitar Town* was given the deluxe remastered-edition treatment last month.) All the genre needs is a straight-up star who can lend the music a public face, and Kasey Chambers—who hails from Australia, a country long known for keeping the country-rock flame burning bright—just may be that person.

If you have heard Chambers before, it's most likely thanks to

*The Sopranos*, which last season used "The Captain," Chambers' soothing ballad urging a friend to stand up for himself, at the conclusion of one episode. With its metronomic beat and breathy delivery, Chambers' song was a little bit country, a little bit rock & roll, and a little bit singer-songwriter



folk. The same goes for **Barri-cades & Brickwalls**, Chambers' second disc, an album that explains the growing prominence of alt-country while at the same time raising a few questions about what this increasingly eclectic genre is.

Half of *Barricades*, for instance, plays like a distaff sequel to *O Brother*. Chambers has a voice as tender and comforting as Alison Krauss', and when it's backed up with acoustic instruments like dobros and gently picked guitars, the results aren't that far off from the work of Krauss or Emmylou Harris. Forlorn ballads like "Not Pretty Enough" and "The Nullarbor Song"—the latter about Cham-

bers' childhood Down Under—are crystalline, understated weepers (Chambers has a fondness for variations on words like *cry* and *tears*). With patron and Nashville rebel mother Lucinda Williams harmonizing along, "On a Bad Day" is a disconsolate slice of Appalachian melancholy with an audible ache in its heart.

These tracks are pleasant, pretty, and immaculately performed, and Chambers' voice is a strong but restrained instrument. She never pours on the lung power too forcefully, and she wisely pulls back just when it seems as if she's about to start sobbing.

But alt-country is supposed to be wilder, more shambolic

than this, and it's telling that Chambers' music cuts deepest when she musses up her hair a little. On the title track, she's determined to get her man, and her assertion that neither chains nor intimidation can keep her away is supported by lumbering guitars that could cut down trees. "Runaway Train" crackles with a similar sexual tension and anti-unplugged ambience, while "I Still Pray" is a moody piece of alt-gospel. When Nashville acts try experiments like these, they rarely sound so unvarnished. Nor would any Music Row thrush snarl a line like "I found the answer but I never liked it"—from "Crossfire," a punkabilly spitfire on which

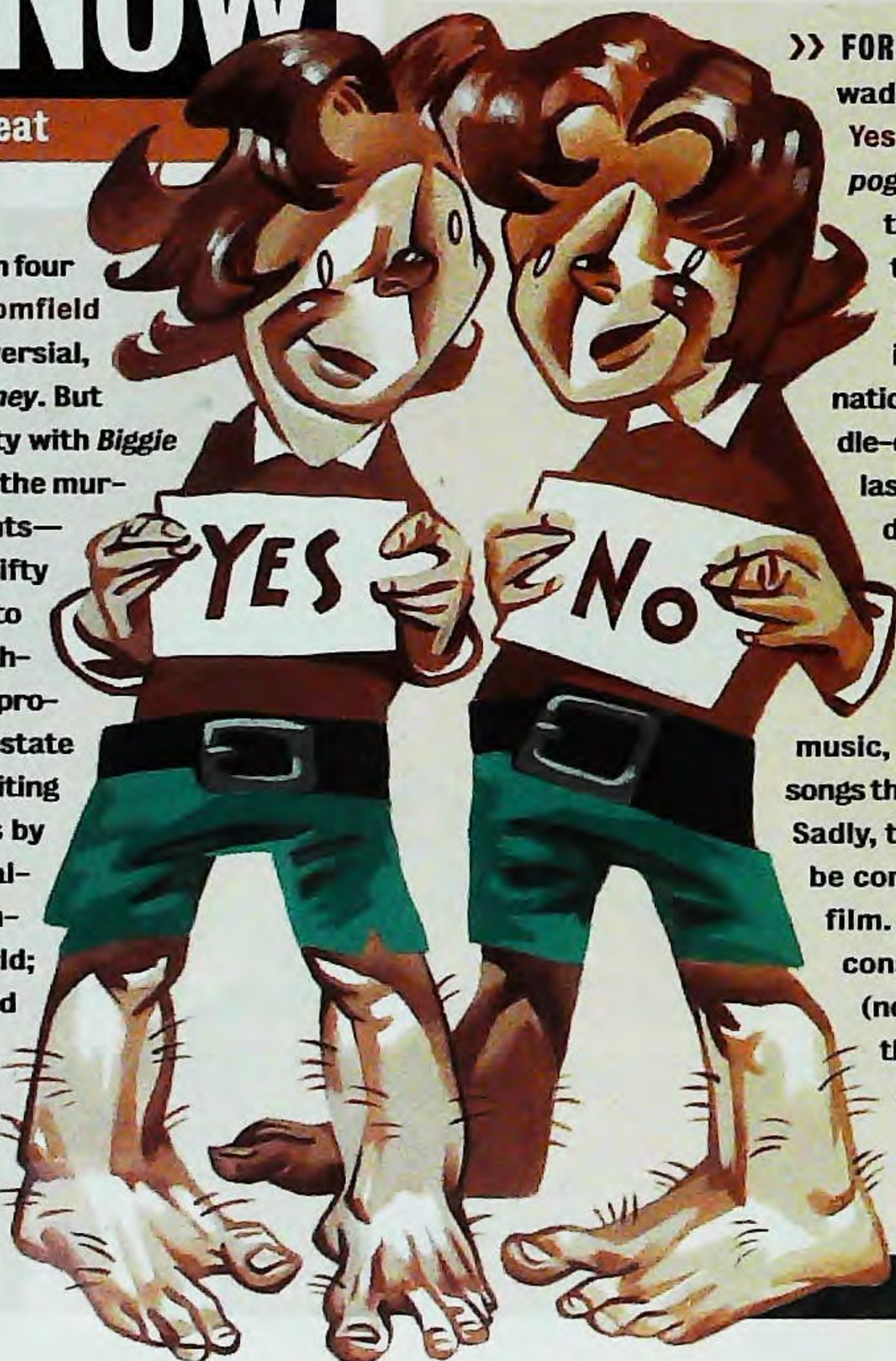
Chambers is backed by the Living End, the Aussie Offspring.

As if to show her allegiance to all things non-Garth, Chambers pays tribute to two dis-solute heroes of alt-country. "A Little Bit Lonesome," a slice of old-school, swinging-door honky-tonk in which she unleashes a modest yodel, is her attempt to write a Hank Williams song. She also honors the ghost of the late Gram Parsons with a faithful cover of his down-but-not-out "Still Feeling Blue." As you'd expect, both cuts are skillful and fastidious. But in saluting hell-raisers of country past, Chambers unintentionally illustrates she should be more of one herself. B

## Hear&Now

This week on the music beat

**>> BRINGING OUT THE DEAD** It's been four years since filmmaker Nick Broomfield shocked Sundance with his controversial, Seattle-scouring doc *Kurt & Courtney*. But last month, he was back in Park City with *Biggie & Tupac*, a twisty investigation into the murders of the two hip-hop heavyweights—a story rife with crooked cops, shifty lawyers, and lots of egos (it has yet to secure distribution). Among the highlights: rare footage of Tupac Shakur, provided by his friends (the rapper's estate didn't cooperate with Broomfield, citing their own Tupac projects); cameos by Biggie Small's mother Marcella Wallace, who guides the British Broomfield through the L.A. hip-hop world; and a rare chat with then-imprisoned Death Row head Suge Knight, whom the film portrays in a less-than-flattering light. So don't look for Knight at the premiere: "If you do something you feel is accurate, most people respect that," says



Broomfield. "Would I watch it with him in the next seat? That would rank high in terms of a nightmare." —**Brian M. Raftery**

**>> FORCE OF HOBBIT** Anyone who's waded through fantasy-infused Yes albums like *Tales From Topographic Oceans* shouldn't be terribly surprised to learn that the prog-rock group's high-pitched singer, Jon Anderson, is a stone *Lord of the Rings* fanatic with a love for all things Middle-earth. "I just reread [Tolkien] last year when I heard they were doing the movie," says Anderson, whose muse was reignited by the experience: "I got together with a musician who works on 17th-century music, and we wrote half a dozen songs that we sent to the producers." Sadly, the tunes arrived too late to be considered for inclusion in the film. Will the music possibly be considered for the *LOTR* sequels (now in production)? New Line, the film's production company, declines to comment—which may be construed as a, er, roundabout way of saying maybe. —**Tom Sinclair**

YES FOR SHIRE? Lord knows

ILLUSTRATION BY THOMAS FUCHS



## Free Love Man

Newly released from jail, '60s psychedelic visionary Arthur Lee aims to reclaim his mantle

**D**URING THE NEARLY SIX years Arthur Lee, founder of the '60s cult band Love, languished in prison on a gun-possession conviction, his spiritual children kept his flame

burning. Washington, D.C.'s the Make Up released a single called "Free Arthur Lee" in '97; a Boston band christened itself the Red Telephone, after a Love song; last year, Rhino Records

reissued Love's watershed '67 album, *Forever Changes*. And in an oblique homage, the White Stripes titled an album *De Stijl* "because Love called their second album *Da Capo*," says Stripes main man Jack White.

For his part, Lee—who was released from the medium-security Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, Calif., on Dec. 12 and is living in L.A.—has never heard of any of the above groups. "[But] if they're not against me, I guess they are for me," Lee, 56, writes in a fax responding to a series of questions from EW.

How did a child of flower power cope with life in the big house? "I tried to keep my cool, although at times that was quite impossible," Lee responds. He wrote no songs behind bars but plans to "step right back into what I was doing before I was so rudely interrupted, and that was touring with my band [L.A.

pop trio Baby Lemonade] and recording more Love songs."

Lee also reports that he has written his autobiography, which he hopes will be published next year. Ironically, MOJO Books has just released *Arthur Lee: Alone Again Or*, a bio by British rock scribe Barney Hoskyns. "If he can get his head and his life together, I daresay he could revive his career," says Hoskyns. "I'd like to see him collaborate with Jason Pierce of Spiritualized or with Super Furry Animals."

Not surprisingly, Lee has yet to read Hoskyns' book. "I would like to know how it feels to write a book about someone you don't know at all," he writes (apparently having forgotten that Hoskyns interviewed him in the early '90s). "Did he spell my name right?" Well, for the record, the book's dedication page reads "For Arthurly." —**TS**

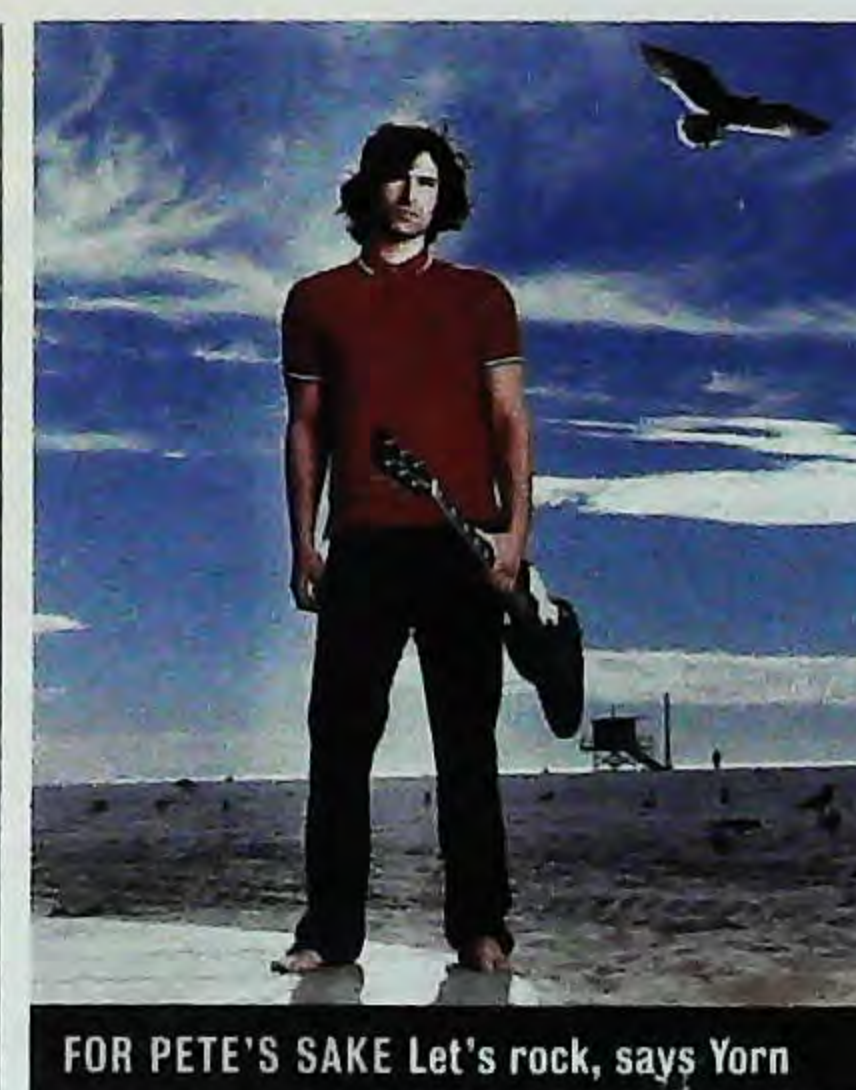
An Indie-Pop Sensation Considers Some Music for the Night Before

## EARS OF YORN

**B**RIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN rootsy pop and noisy indie rock, Pete Yorn had one of 2001's best-received debuts with *musicforthemorningafter*. Just to make sure he was in a "Strange Condition" (per his new single), EW put a figurative blindfold on Yorn and played him some recent tracks. —**Chris Willman**

• **THE STROKES** "The Modern Age" "I know this record very well.... These are my favorite kind of drums—very straight. The ride cymbal comes in here.... The chorus reminds me of Morrissey, the romantic way he delivers it.... And this guitar part here—classic rock & roll."

• **BRITNEY SPEARS** "I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman" "I swear to God, I knew you were gonna play this!... I don't think it's



FOR PETE'S SAKE Let's rock, says Yorn

going for my demographic. [Suddenly wistful] Sometimes a woman retains a lot of her girlish qualities, so she's still a girl to me. Even my mom! She has

all these qualities of a teenage girl, still."

• **RYAN ADAMS** "New York, New York" "My favorite part is the sax outro; it reminds me of something from the '70s I can't place. People compare me to Ryan, but I don't really get that."

• **JAY FARRAR** "Barstow" "There's Jay! When Uncle Tupelo broke up, I was in the Farrar camp and not into Wilco at all, though now I love both bands equally. [Lyrics: "By the time we get to Barstow/ We'll be more than halfway to hell..."] That's true. My buddy who just died, Ted Demme, would take about 10 of us on a minibus from L.A. to Vegas every year. Once we hit Barstow, I'd be [excitedly] 'Oh, we're getting close!' I'm usually a few beers in, pretty drunk at that point, knowing I'm gonna get in much more trouble when I get to town."



# The Week

## » Singles

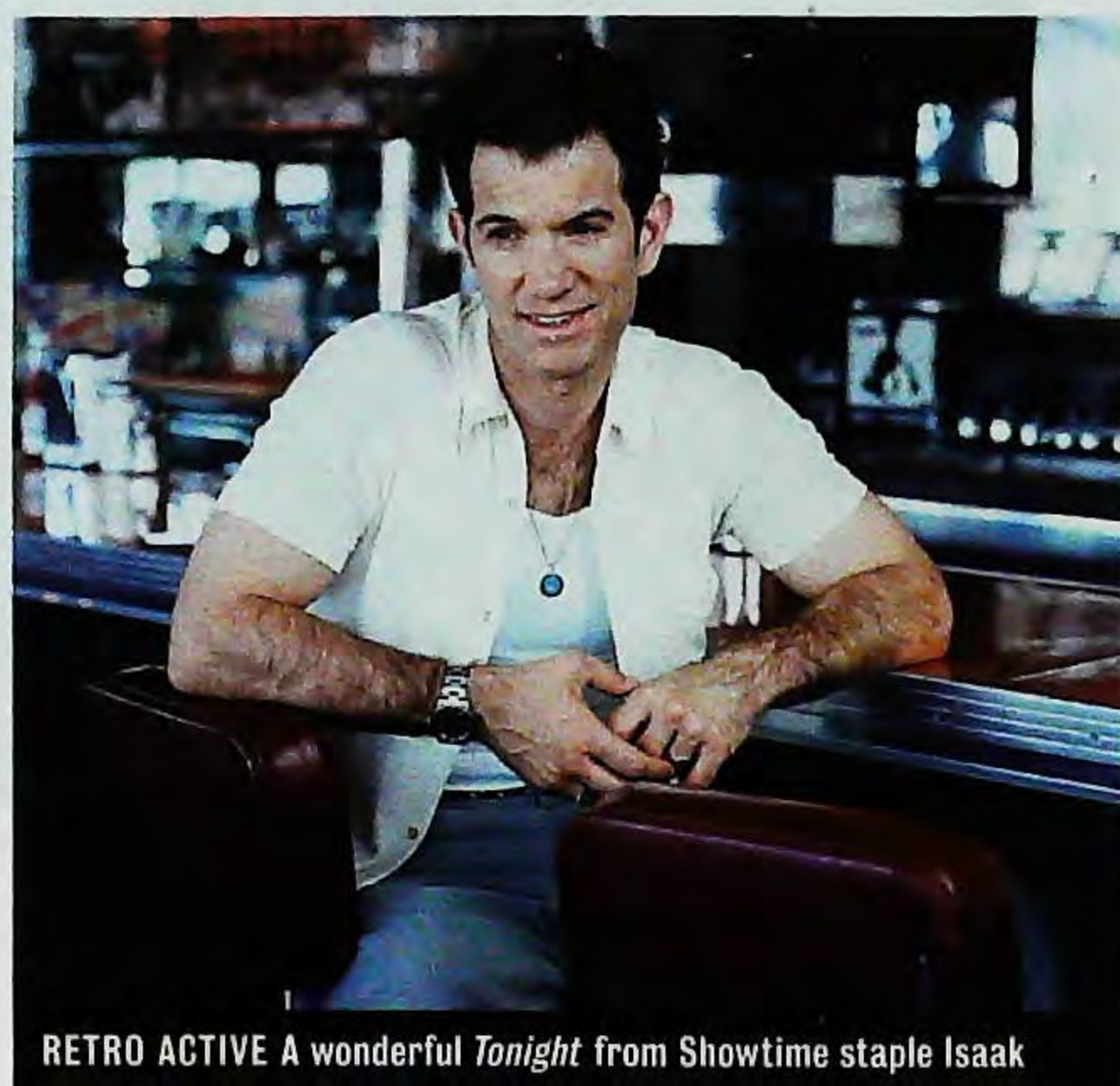
**BASEMENT JAXX** • "Where's Your Head At?" (*Astralwerks*) It's a wonder that this ludicrously addictive garage/funk/rap track didn't jump off the Basement Jaxx album when it was released last July and become the hit of summer 2001. No matter. With Gary Numan samples whirring like an ancient power plant, ultra-smooth lead vocals by Damien Peachy, and the catchiest call-out hook since "Song 2," "Head?" has ubiquity in its future. Think of it as the summer song of winter 2002. **A-** —*Josh Tyrangiel*

**CHER** • "(This Is) A Song for the Lonely" (*Warner Bros.*) Dancing queens, rejoice: Cher's back. Her new CD's leadoff single (which she fist-pumpingly premiered on last month's American Music Awards)

uses the same ingredients that made 1998's "Believe" a smash—melancholy lyrics plus a high-energy boom-chicka beat—minus the pointless digital noodling. "Song" might not dominate the charts like "Believe" did, but the 56-year-old's vocals are so confident you almost forgive her for lip-synching on the AMAs. **B+** —*Dave Karger*

## » Pop/Rock/Rap

**CHRIS ISAAK** • *Always Got Tonight* (*Reprise*) As on his previous seven discs, Isak doesn't stray far from his rockabilly/brooding ballad/retro-rock formula. Still, he (with long-time band the Silvertones) performs with such charming, seasoned assurance, that *Always* feels like a warm visit from an old pal. And with party-starting standouts like "American Boy" (his nifty Showtime series theme) and the loungey-



RETRO ACTIVE A wonderful *Tonight* from Showtime staple Isaak

surf guitar-funk of "Notice the Ring," Isaak deserves to be back on the charts. **B+** —*Beth Johnson*

**RICHARD HAWLEY** • *Late Night Final* (*Selanta*) Sometimes you can tell everything you need to

know about an album from the song titles. "The Nights Are Cold," "Lonely Night," "Can You Hear the Rain, Love?" Hawley's CD is full of sad songs about dark skies and inclement weather, and sure enough, his music is beautifully suited to the wee small hours of the morning. It's perfect feel-good feel-bad music. **A-** —*RB*

**JOOLS HOLLAND** • *Jools Holland's Big Band Rhythm & Blues* (*Rhino*) While its main selling point may be George Harrison's impassioned swan song, "Horse to the Water," this all-star extravaganza is mainly an elegantly arranged set of R&B and pop chestnuts, presided over by ex-Squeeze keyboardist Holland. The nominal star displays fleet-fingered instrumental expertise, while leaving the singing to guests ranging from Eric Clapton to Joe Strummer to Jamiroquai, who lend a chummy, effortless vibe to the proceedings. **B+** —*Scott Schinder*

**FU MANCHU** • *California Crossing* (*Mammoth*) Fu Manchu aren't bad, exactly. At times, their guitar acrobatics and pop-rock hooks merge to create moments that are, well, almost worth listening to. But without the wit, innovation, or nuance to redeem these mundane meditations on cars, sun, and chicks, the band doesn't do much to counter the outdated notion that Californians are airheads. **C** —*Evan Serpick*

**CORNELIUS** • *Point* (*Matador*) Beautiful music for clever 21st-century lads and lassies. The impish



## Nicole Kidman and Kate Winslet

Here's some rock to go with those roles. Winslet's single, "What If," and Nicole Kidman's "Somethin' Stupid" (with Robbie Williams) are top 10 hits in Germany. Could it get any wurst?

knob-twiddler also known as Keigo Oyamada has emerged from his Tokyo studio with a worthy follow-up to 1998's *Fantasma*: 11 irresistible sound collages that feature driving beats, amiable guitar acoustics, and a quadruphonous sense of aural play that encourages rampant headphone abuse. Songs like "Point of View Point" yank your ears in four different directions at once; better yet, tracks like "Bird Watching at Inner Forest" exude a sly humanistic warmth. **A** —*Ty Burr*

**HENRI SALVADOR** • *Room With a View* (*Blue Note*) Best known as an affably cheesy French TV show host from the '60s, Salvador has also released numerous lounge and novelty recordings (who could forget "Da! Da! Niet! Niet!"). Now, thanks to the fetishism of global DJs, the 84-year-old crooner—like Austrian counterpart Louie Austen—is again au courant. This surprisingly unlatency set of jazzy bossa novas, already a smash in France, finds his bilingual bedroom whisper intact and effective. Nifty for necking. **B** —*Will Hermes*

**JOSH CLAYTON-FELT** • *Spirit Touches Ground* (*DreamWorks*) Recorded in the mid-'90s, this long-awaited third album from the ex-School of Fish frontman was twice derailed, first by record-company politics and then by Clayton-Felt's

death by cancer in early 2000. But the wait wasn't half as frustrating as finally hearing the album, which is so laden with talent and promise it's almost painful to listen to. Like similarly minded L.A. smart-pop artists Aimee Mann and Jason Falkner, Clayton-Felt writes modest songs that take time to reveal their true depth. It's a real loss that the singer won't get the same chance himself. **B+** —*RB*

## » Soundtracks

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** • *Scratch* (*Transparent Music*) This companion CD to a documentary about the history of turntablism abundantly fills its needle-drop quota with cuts from Technics grandmasters like Rob Swift, DJ Premier, and the X-Ecutioners. But the scratch-to-hook ratio is way out of whack, and the album becomes a grueling endurance test. Unless, of course, your idea of phun is a tedious, nearly nine-minute remake of Herbie Hancock's 1983 proto-techno hit, "Rockit." **B-** —*Marc Weingarten*

## » Country

**TRAVIS TRITT** • *The Rockin' Side; The Lovin' Side* (*Rhino*) When Tritt debuted in 1990, he was dismissed as a Hank Williams Jr. clone, a rowdy honky-tonker steeped in deep-dish Southern fare. But the Georgia native with the club-cured, scotch-and-stogies baritone soon carved out his own identity based on his evocative ballads and harder-rockin' testosterone-fueled barn burners. These two 16-track discs are sold individually, but the ballad-heavy *Lovin' Side* would have benefitted from a little of Tritt's sweatier stuff. Make your own mix at home. *Rockin': A- Lovin': B* —*Alanna Nash*

## » Jazz

**DAVID BENOIT** • *Fuzzy Logic* (*GRP*) One of smooth jazz's early architects turns up the heat ever so slightly. Benoit's flourished approach on piano takes the lead over a lean, soft-edged funk sound from a rhythm section. For textural variation, trumpeter Rick Braun and pop flutist Tim Weisberg toss licks into the groove stew of "War of the S.U.V.s," and woodwinds grace the balladic "Reflections." Overall, the music doesn't demand too much of the listener—the smooth jazz ethic in action. **C+** —*Josef Woodard*

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(AOL Keyword: EW)

## THE CHARTS

## MARY HAD A LITTLE PLAN

**N**O MORE DRAMA. THAT'S THE name of a Mary J. Blige record, but it's also a description of this week's album chart, where, almost spookily, positions 1 through 9 remain unchanged from last week. And then along came Mary. Her *Drama* was rereleased with two new tracks, enabling it to jump to No. 10. Two new releases snuck into the top 15: the soundtrack to the hip-hop crime drama *State Property*, debuting at No. 14 with 52,000 copies sold, and drama queen Barbra Streisand's greatest-hits set, close behind with 51,000. Alan Jackson enjoyed a third week on top with another 189,000 sold, a dramatic figure amid today's otherwise flaccid country market.



### POP ALBUMS

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ALBUM	WEEKS ON CHART
1	1	ALAN JACKSON <i>Drive</i> , Arista Nashville	3
2	2	CREED <i>Weathered</i> , Wind-Up	11
3	3	LINKIN PARK <i>Hybrid Theory</i> , Warner Bros.	67
4	4	LUDACRIS <i>Word of Mouf</i> , Def Jam	10
5	5	NICKELBACK <i>Silver Side Up</i> , Roadrunner	21
6	6	JA RULE <i>Pain Is Love</i> , Murder Inc./Def Jam	18
7	7	NAS <i>Stillmatic</i> , Ill Will/Columbia	7
8	8	USHER <i>8701</i> , Arista	26
9	9	PINK <i>M!ssundaztood</i> , Arista	11
10	28	MARY J. BLIGE <i>No More Drama</i> , MCA	23
11	10	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>O Brother... soundtrack</i> , Mercury Nashville	58
12	12	ALICIA KEYS <i>Songs in A Minor</i> , J	32
13	17	PUDDLE OF MUDD <i>Come Clean</i> , Interscope	23
14	—	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>State Property</i> soundtrack, Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam	1
15	—	BARBRA STREISAND <i>The Essential Barbra Streisand</i> , Columbia	1

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### IN STORES FEBRUARY 19

**BEATNUITS** *Classic Nuts Vol. 1: The Best of the Beatnuts* (Loud) The Latino b-boys' best-of wisely focuses on their earlier, less gangsta-fied material. With cameos from Big Pun and Method Man.

**YO-YO MA** *Yo-Yo Ma Plays the Music of John Williams* (Sony Classical) Film scorer Williams (*Star Wars*, *Jaws*) composed three songs for the cellist; the fourth was written for a memorial service for a friend's children.

**AIR** *Everybody Hertz* (Astralwerks) This album includes tunes from Air's 2001 disc, *10,000 Hz Legend*—remixed by such diverse deckhands as the Neptunes, Daft Punk, and Modjo—plus a previously unreleased track, "The Way You Look Tonight."

**JOEY RAMONE** *Don't Worry About Me* (Sanctuary) Released 10 months after the punk legend's death, this collection features a solo Joey, with guests Andy Sheernoff (the Dictators), Captain Sensible (the Damned), and Marky Ramona.

### ON TOUR

**KID ROCK** The Cocky rocker launches his North American tour on Feb. 22 in Saginaw, Mich. So far, 31 dates are confirmed through May 4 (Atlanta)—but more gigs are expected.

**MICHELLE BRANCH**, whose single "Everywhere" (from her debut, *The Spirit Room*) was a summer hit, will spend February zigzagging the country on her first headlining tour.

**ALICIA KEYS** will take a brief break from the road to perform (and most likely win several statues) at the Feb. 27 Grammys. Then it's back to her concerts, which will conclude in San Diego on March 10.

## A New Flock of Thrushes Sing for Their Supper

# DIVAS IN TRAINING

FOR ASPIRING MARY J.'S, CROONING THE hook on a hot hip-hop track is the fastest way to climb the R&B ladder. It worked for Kelis, who debuted with Ol' Dirty Bastard on 1999's

"Got Your Money," and Lil' Mo, who jammed on Ja Rule's 2000 "Put It on Me." EW zeroes in on the latest batch of vocalists aiming to grab the mic for themselves. —*Malcolm Venable and ES*

	CHORUS GIRL	HOOKED UP WITH	SOLO EXPEDITION	ODDS FOR SUCCESS
JAGUAR WRIGHT		The Roots ("What You Want"; "The Lesson, Pt. III"); Jay-Z ( <i>Unplugged</i> album)	The just-out <i>Denials, Delusions, Decisions</i>	5 to 1. Wright's boho style and versatile alto work as well in a hip-hop club as a jazz café.
RES		GZA ("Beneath the Surface"); Talib Kweli ("Too Late")	Last year's <i>How I Do</i>	20 to 1. Her eclectic debut didn't fly off shelves, but keep an eye on this talented singer-songwriter.
NIVEA		Mystikal ("Danger [Been So Long]")	Her bangin' single, "Don't Mess With the Radio," has us pumped for her March debut.	10 to 1. The single gave us just enough of this smooth songstress to leave us itching for more.
TWEET		Missy Elliott ("Take Away"); Timbaland ("All Y'all")	<i>Southern Hummingbird</i> , due April 2	3 to 1. This songbird is ready to take off.





# To Surf With Love

Need a little help getting in the mood? These sites are sure to satisfy hopeless and hapless romantics alike. by Ann Limpert

**V**ALentine's DAY IS fast approaching. But fear not, lovelorn ones, we've scoured the Net for some online diversions that should palliate the anxieties of this potentially ominous day. In these sites you'll find matches both starry and star-filled, share in the wickedly voyeuristic thrills of a would-be Cupid, and, through the personal ad of a longhaired fellow with a familiar name, laugh at the prospect of dating altogether. And hey, they're more entertaining than a Shoebox greeting card.

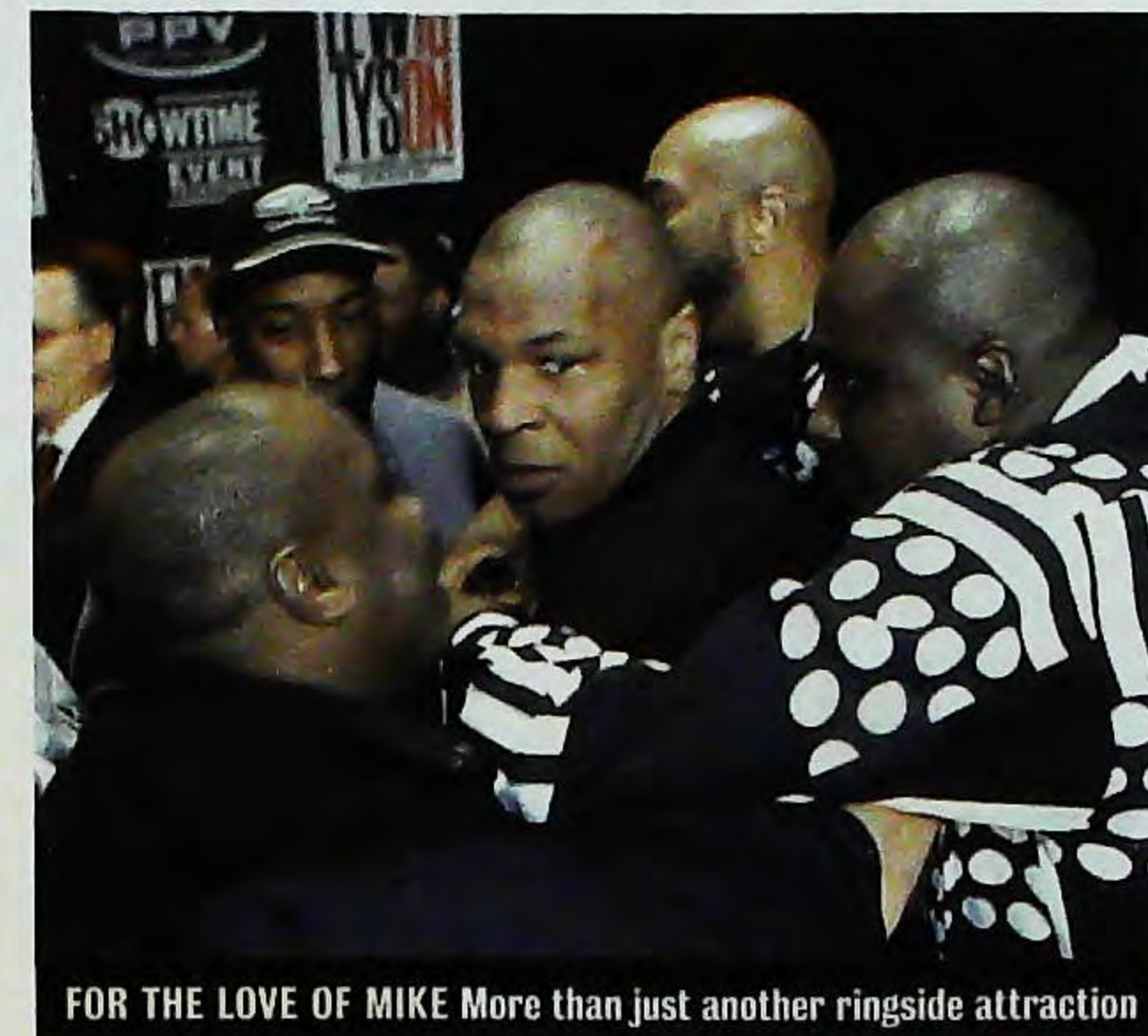
● **EMODE'S CELEBRITY MATCH-MAKER TEST** (*emode.com*) You may have used this online quiz mecca to find your aura, test your IQ, and discover the breed of dog you're most like. Better still, they also have a ton of scintillating tests to deconstruct your romantic sensibilities. There's the "Which Candy Heart Are You?" quiz, the "Passion Predictor," and our favorite, the "Celebrity Matchmaker" test, in which you are grilled on basic personality points (e.g., Are you more Speedy Gonzalez or Sleepy

Smurf?) and told which Hollywood star you ought to be strolling down a red carpet with—that is, if the world were a perfect place. And kids, if you're worried that George Clooney might seem a little out of place at the prom, there's a teen version, too.

● **THESPAK.COM'S DATE-MY-SISTER PROJECT** (*thespark.com/science/sister*) In May of 2001, Christian Rudder—editor of this shrewdly silly humor site whose previous science experiments include the infamous

StinkyFeet Diaries and the Fat Project—set up his unlucky-in-love younger sister, Melissa... in more than just the romantic sense. He lured her to Boston, where she checked out the city and wrote a column for his site, while at the same time he introduced her to some of his eligible guy friends. The object? To find Melissa a date and entertain the world. Using hidden cameras, imported Slovenian wiretaps, and fake mustaches, Rudder surreptitiously chronicled each of his unsuspecting sib's dates, and posted the goods online. Who cares if the premise is kind of perverted? The resulting dossier is a sort of JenniCam-meets-*Blind Date*, and Christian's droll text is the perfect counterpoint to the sound and video files of his poor sister. Laugh—and thank God you don't have a brother like him.

● **JESUS.COM** (*jesus.com*) Okay, so Jesus isn't this guy's real name, but he (a) sports robes and long brown hair, (b) leads a monastic lifestyle, and (c) believes he's "created the most extravagant personal ad in the history of civilization." When not writing sermons on such weighty topics as "Time for a Spiritual Spring Cleaning" and "Cobain and Generation Numb," pseudo-Jesus loves to cook and exercise (boasting "True to artistic depictions, I have...a six-pack")—but frowns on reading. One more thing: He's obsessed with bathing and showering. The site includes photos of these activities. And if a date seems like too much of a commitment, the merely curious are invited to join him in the tub—for spiritual consultation and hydro-conservation purposes, of course. If nothing else, this bizarre site gives a troubling answer to the question, What would Jesus do? ■



FOR THE LOVE OF MIKE More than just another ringside attraction

## WHATtoSURF

### » Movies

**I AM SAM** ♦ (*iamsammovie.com*) The site claims love is all you need, but it looks like little of that went into *I Am Sam*'s official Web page. Sure, the usual plot summary, trailer, photos, and cast bios are all here, but visually, there's nothing particularly memorable other than an origami bird that unfolds as you press onward. Why, since *Sam* star Sean Penn plays a character with such spirit and personality, have the creators put together a site so lacking in both? **C**—Kelly Choi

### » Net Cetera

**BADJOCKS.COM** ♦ (*badjocks.com*) In the shadow of the Winter Olympics, Bob Reno's site serves up (off-)color commentary on the grittier side of sports. Under a scoreboard tallying athlete misconduct, Reno ticks off a foul play-by-play of mayhem by players, coaches, and fans, from the familiarly boorish (Bobby Knight, Mike Tyson) to the utterly outlandish (cheerleaders sue NFL teams over peeping-Tom players). Wanna vent? Cast your ballot in a BadJocks.com weekly poll. **B+**—Ben Spier

**GALLERY OF REGRETTABLE FOOD** (*likeks.com/institute/gallery*) The Food Network this is not. A comedic celebration of culinary Americana from the 1940s to '60s,

GORF makes you glad Spam is no longer welcome in the four major food groups. Three main sections (Recipe Books, Potpourri, Bad Ads) take you down the memory lane of such unsightly victuals as "Susan's Party Sandwich Loaf" (think Wonder Bread meets Cool Whip) and kitschy ads for various wonder-appliances ("The Shelvador," anyone?). Though devoid of the bells and whistles that are de rigueur in most sites these days, GORF is none the weaker for it. After all, do you really want to witness animated "Beef Porcupines"? **A**—Missy Schwartz

### » Music

**DRUM MACHINE MUSEUM** (*drummachine.com*) If you've noticed a frightening similarity in the music of '80s pop band Hall & Oates and last year's critical fave Shuggie Otis, then you'll be interested in their common link—each relied on classic drum machines of the 1970s. This showcase site succeeds in its mission to be the world's most comprehensive resource for all things drum-machine related, including photos, specs, and sound loops from more than 70 classic machines over the last 40 years. And the beat goes on. **A**—Colby Hall

More reviews at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com)  
(AOL Keyword: EW)

### GAME OVER? NOT REALLY

## 'GRAND' SLAM

"SO CONTROVERSIAL, THEY ARE PULLING THESE OFF the shelves." That's the sales pitch for an "uncensored" copy of the PlayStation 2 game *Grand Theft Auto III* recently posted on eBay, where the videogame fetches upwards of \$70. And while there's no truth to the rumor that *GTA3* (\$49.99; Rockstar Games) is being pulled from stores, it's easy to see how it started. This is, after all, the carjacking game in which players gather ammo and whack opposing gang members (and the occasional police officer) on behalf of the Trlads, Diablos, or one of five other organized crime families vying for control of Liberty City. (And that's the G-rated description.) *GTA3* also happens to be the best-selling videogame of 2001, the target of a week's worth of Aaron McGruder's comic strip *The Boondocks*, and the favored pastime of Colln Hanks (Tom Hanks' son and star of *Orange County*), who raved about it to Jon Stewart on his last visit to *The Daily Show*. While critics still assail the increasing amount of violence in videogames, *GTA3* shows that gamers still have an appetite for destruction. And just in time for Rockstar Games' latest, *State of Emergency*, which is set in an urban riot zone. —Noah Robischon



### CYBERTALK

"I'm a brunette right now.... I was kind of bored being a blonde. And that's the fun part of being a girl—changing your hair color, painting your nails, putting on makeup, dressing up, and all that good stuff!" —A Walk to Remember's MANDY MOORE, on the joys of being a teenage girl, on ET Online

"Now it's over. But for me, it wasn't a boom.... It was about a few artists that... were doing well, and two of them were Puerto Rican—Marc Anthony and Ricky Martin—and I'm from Spain. It's like saying there's three guys from Ohio who are singers, and they start doing well; is that an Ohio music trend?" —Singer ENRIQUE IGLESIAS, on the Latin pop explosion, on CNow.com





# Prince Of Despair

**ENGORE** Troubled troubadour Del Shannon gave in to his demons and took his own life 12 years ago. by Erin Richter

**W**ITH A FALSETTO VOICE AS ANGELIC as Roy Orbison's, Del Shannon went from selling carpet in Battle Creek, Mich., to touring the world on the heels of his 1961 hit "Runaway" within a year. But the despair and loneliness that fueled some of his best work apparently

caught up with him on Feb. 8, 1990, when the 55-year-old shot himself in the head with a .22-caliber rifle in his Santa Clarita, Calif., home.

Born Charles Westover in Coopersville, Mich., Shannon started singing at age 8 and took up guitar at 14. Blending the names of a friend and a Coupe DeVille for his nom de musique, Del Shannon was 26 and spending his nights playing Battle Creek's Hi-Lo Club with keyboardist Max Crook when the two stumbled onto the minor-to-major notes of "Runaway." Their emotional

cry for a lost love raced to the top of the U.S. and U.K. pop charts, to be followed by hits like "Hats Off to Larry," "So Long Baby," and "Little Town Flirt." Shannon even preempted the British Invasion, becoming the first State-side artist to record a Beatles song with his 1963 version of "From Me to You."

Still, the Brit wave overcame him, and his popularity foundered. Shannon spent the '70s touring in England and collaborating with the likes of Dave Edmunds and ELO's Jeff Lynne, while



THE GREAT DEPRESSION Despite his success, failure haunted Shannon

facing a growing problem with alcohol. (He stopped drinking in 1979.) He made a small comeback with a 1982 cover of "Sea of Love," produced by longtime fan Tom Petty, and his rerecording of "Runaway" for Michael Mann's 1986-88 TV series, *Crime Story*. He was also rumored to be joining Petty in the Traveling Wilburys after Orbison's death in 1988. "He was one of those guys who had everything I wanted when I started to write songs," Petty said, "great stories, a really good sound, and

that great, big, high voice."

Shannon put that sound to work once again, recording the Lynne-produced album *Rock On!* (released in 1991) up until his death. Though Shannon had always suffered bouts of depression—shortly before his suicide, the road-weary rocker spoke of his reluctance to tour—those close to him were stunned. His second wife, LeAnne (he had three children with first wife, Shirley Nash), blamed Prozac (a suit against the drug's manufacturer was dropped). Perhaps the fears that drove his music finally overtook him. "He came from a small town and shot to fame instantly," recalls friend and manager Dan Bourgoise. "The characters [in his songs] emerged out of this paranoia he had of having all he achieved taken away from him.... He feared being alone. And I think, in the end, he felt very alone." ■

## TIME CAPSULE • FEBRUARY 8, 1990

**AT THE MOVIES,** Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman steer eventual Best Picture *Driving Miss Daisy* (right) to a No. 1 finish at the box office. **IN MUSIC,** "girl" power rules the *Billboard* album chart as Paula Abdul's *Forever Your Girl* and Milli Vanilli's *Girl You Know It's True* fin-



ish one-two. **IN BOOKSTORES,** Stephen King's latest thriller, *The Dark Half*, is a *Publishers Weekly* best-seller. **AND IN THE NEWS,** just over a year after the Lockerbie, Scotland, bombing of Pan Am flight 103, the State Department warns that a terrorist attack against Americans in Europe is possible.

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WHY REPEAT WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN SAID?



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